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JACK WESTROPP

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride."—*Childe Harold*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

DOWNEY & CO.

12 YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

1895

Feb 5 60 Wm

Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 23 July 56, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841

IN WHICH GREEK MEETS GREEK, AND AN ALARMING
TUG OF WAR IS THE RESULT 43

CHAPTER VII.

MY DECLARATION TO MISS MUNKITTRICK.—STRANGE SEQUEL	PAGE 52
---	------------

CHAPTER VIII.

I GIVE PROOFS OF CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF, AND OF THE EVILS OF EXCESS IN OTHERS . . .	65
--	----

CHAPTER IX.

A FOOL'S PARADISE.—A LOVER'S LEAP	79
---	----

CHAPTER X.

I AM KEPT IN BONDAGE BY THE SPELLS OF A HOSTILE MAGICIAN	90
---	----

CHAPTER XI.

I INVOKE THE AID OF A POTENT ENCHANTER TO BREAK THE SPELL	106
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

MR. FOGARTY CONSULTS AN EMINENT MERCHANT AS TO THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS OF BRINGING ME TO JUSTICE	117
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW TO PROCURE BALLAST	129
----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCERNING "THE NOOSE" AND OTHER GRAVE MATTERS	139
--	-----

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH I AM PRESENTED WITH A WHITE ELEPHANT	148
---	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT	PAGE 158
-----------------------------------	-------------

CHAPTER XVII.

CHASING A MYTH, AND CATCHING A TARTAR . . .	171
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH A NOBLEMAN WITH SIXTEEN QUARTERS OBTAINS A BETTER HALF	184
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH I RECEIVE A DEPUTATION OF STRONG-MINDED FEMALES	194
---	-----

JACK WESTROPP.

CHAPTER I.

AN IRISH GENTLEMAN IN SEARCH OF A SUBSISTENCE.

AT the age of twenty-five, when I introduce myself to the reader, I was a reporter on the Dublin *Retriever*, and just about to be called to the Irish bar. My father, a County Clare gentleman of excellent family and dissipated habits—the only legacy I ever derived from him—had died some nine or ten years before, and I was now living in Lower Baggot Street with my mother and my sister Kate. My education, such as it was, had been acquired at three several academies, the bills of which I believe remain to this day unsettled. The Westropp family, indeed, might have chosen for their motto Pistol's sapient maxim, "Base is the slave who pays;" and I don't think I should ever have attained any profession, had not my father's brother John, a rich and somewhat niggardly old bachelor, been pleased to think that my eloquence and my impudence qualified me for peculiar eminence at the bar, and under-

taken to pay all necessary expenses in working my way thereto—but alas! nothing further.

The curious thing, perhaps, was that I fully shared Uncle John's flattering estimate of my forensic qualifications. Though I did not know the difference between a *fi. fa.* and a *ca. sa.*, and could not explain what was meant by a motion for liberty to file a replication *nunc pro tunc*, I confidently expected in a few years to eclipse the laurels of Pennefather and Lefroy. So absurdly sanguine is the mind of youth! Only couple me in a great case with some dry legal hack, who should attend to the commonplace matters of argument, evidence, and "cases in point," and leave me the congenial task of overwhelming the jury with a torrent of wit and eloquence, and I felt convinced of achieving an unparalleled reputation.

I also hoped for great things in the courts of Hymen as well as in those of Themis. Heiresses were not yet an extinct race in Ireland, and it was well known that Miss Mary Anne Munkittrick, of Merrion Square, only daughter of a leading wine merchant, enjoyed a fortune of forty thousand pounds. Now, it so happened that Mary Anne and I knew each other perfectly well—by appearance. We had often met at the Theatre Royal, at the squares, at the Portobello Gardens, and in the Park. I had ogled her assiduously, and she had smiled upon me graciously, so that, as sometimes happens in such cases, there was a sort of tacit understanding between us. Could not that understanding be improved, and might not it ultimately

ripen into mutual love? For my part, I admired her rosy cheeks, her auburn hair, her laughing eye, her buxom figure, and still more—as being much more essential to my happiness—her forty thousand pounds. Her name, perhaps, was not as handsome as herself; but there was a way of improving even that. Mary Anne Munkittrick was one thing—“Marion” Westropp would be quite another. She was of a well-known Catholic family too; but I was an Irish gentleman in search of a subsistence, not of a religion.

Ogling and smiling, however, were not matrimony, even as the magnificent charge at Balaclava was not war. I felt that some valuable minor redoubts had been captured; but the fortress itself could only be stormed after a regular introduction. At last fortune seemed to smile upon me, my friend Dr. O'Reilly, who was intimate with Mr. Munkittrick, having procured me an invitation to a grand ball at that gentleman's house in the early part of the year 1843.

An unexpected difficulty now presented itself. My dress suit had seen much service, and was fast merging into a condition too seedy to be used when attempting so great a conquest. My credit with the fashionable tailors of Dublin was at zero; and as I spent three hundred a year out of a salary of a hundred and twenty, ready money was out of the question. Was it possible that a well-built strapping young fellow, with infinite powers of fascination, should be debarred from so excellent an opportunity of settling

himself in life by that absurd cause, the want of a suit of clothes? It seemed even too likely; and I was in a very dejected mood as I strolled into the office of the *Retriever*, the evening before the ball.

I found Mr. St. George, the proprietor, in great spirits, partly owing to a scathing article of mine in that day's paper, in which I had imputed every imaginable iniquity to Mr. Daniel O'Connell, and had represented that gentleman as a conspirator against the State, of deeper dye than Catiline himself. St. George was the most honest and consistent old Tory in Ireland, and though I had drawn a couple of weeks' salary in advance, and otherwise confused the distinctions of *meum* and *tuum* in the office, it was impossible for him to think ill of one who had made so violent an attack on the great agitator.

"How do you do, Mr. Westropp? I am very happy to see you.—By-the-bye, you look rather downcast this evening. Nothing the matter, I hope?"

"Oh no—not much;" and I heaved a groan. "The fact is, I have been asked to a ball for to-morrow night, sir." I was going to say at Munkittrick's, but I fortunately checked myself in time. "The dreaded name of Demogorgon" could not have alarmed Mr. St. George half as much as that of Munkittrick, whom he was wont to classify under the head of the three obnoxious R's, i.e. Repealer, Rebel, and Romanist.

"Well, well, well—I don't care for these sort of things myself. They *are* a bore to a man of brains, though I

think it only right to go to the balls at the Castle now and then—ha!—hum—a man must sometimes sacrifice himself to show his loyalty, you know. But they say ‘youth must have its fling.’ You are—let me see—I should say you are some thirty years younger than I” (if he had said forty-five, he would have been much nearer the mark); “and at your time of life, I really would not take it so much to heart.”

“Ah, sir, you are very kind;—but I can’t help taking a shabby dress suit very much to heart.”

“What! how is this? You always turn out uncommonly well in town. Do you mean to say you have not got a good dress suit?”

“That is unfortunately my case. It is nearly worn out in the service.”

“Then of course you had better not go to the ball.”

“Yes—but there will be a charming girl there—a great heiress—who is dying to meet me. An introduction would be the making of me.”

Mr. St. George whistled a single bar, and seemed lost in thought. “There is something in that,” he said.

“Very much,” I replied.

“I’ll tell you what, Westropp,” at last he remarked, “you and I are something about a size.”

“I daresay, sir, there’s not much more than six inches difference in our height.”

“Pooh! that’s nothing—a trifle—a shade. I should not like you to lose this chance, and I don’t think you could do better than go in *my* dress suit. I may say it’s brand new.”

What ! ask Gulliver to squeeze himself into the livery of Lilliput ! The proposition seemed monstrous ; and yet I reflected that St. George was notorious for always wearing clothes enormously too big for him, and that those clothes were of the richest materials, and of the latest and most fashionable cut. A moment's consideration convinced me that the suit which looked ridiculous on his squat little figure would probably show to advantage on my towering proportions, and I hastily cried—

“My dear sir, you are very kind, yes—the difference in our sizes is very slight. We are, as you observe, very much of a height. I feel greatly indebted to you.”

And Hood's lines forcibly recurred to me—

“A great judge and a little judge,
Both judges of Assize.”

“Don't mention it, my dear boy : I only hope you'll catch the heiress. Just drive off to my house and see if the things fit you.”

They certainly fitted me much better than the man for whom they were made, at all events, and in all the splendour of borrowed plumes I presented myself next night at Munkittrick Hall, as the Dublinians were wont to call a certain large house in Merrion Square.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH I USE ANOTHER MAN'S SUIT, IN ORDER TO
GAIN MY OWN.

As I have observed one ball to be very like another, I don't propose to weary the reader with details which might be interesting enough from a milliner's point of view, but in which I could not for a moment hope to compete with that admirable modern institution, the Society Journal. A word, however, about the Munkittrick family, which was limited to four persons, viz., The fair Mary Anne, her brother Ferdinand, and their parents. "Old Mun"—for by this irreverent abbreviation he was familiarly known in town—was a shrewd man of business, but a strange mixture of geniality and pomposity. Though seventy-six years of age, his frame was still powerful and erect, and his features were pleasing and handsome. While utterly incapable of anything so vulgar as a joke, he was no mean proficient in the art of after-dinner oratory, then much in fashion, by which eloquence worthy of a better cause was wasted on the follies and insincerities of mutual admiration. Old Mun, indeed, seemed to consider himself always "on his legs,"

and as he was wont to embellish his ordinary discourse with tropes and sentiments breathing fervent aspirations for the welfare of his companions, the effect was as grotesque as need be. His wife was a vulgar, showily dressed woman, very ambitious of distinguished acquaintances, and without any of her husband's pretensions to originality. Ferdinand was designed for his father's business, but his great object was to be considered a man of fashion, and as he had pocket money *ad libitum*, and sported the stiffest of neckcloths and the glossiest of hats, his claim to the title was indisputable. Otherwise perhaps there was nothing very remarkable about him, if I except his grammar, which was certainly remarkably bad. As for Mary Anne—*my* Marion, as I hoped soon to call her—we shall hear her speak for herself.

The Munkittricks spared no expense in their entertainments, and a ball at their house was always a scene of unbounded hilarity. The large rooms were crowded with a miscellaneous assemblage, most of whom, I fear, would have been puzzled to account for their ancestry. An "honourable," however, and a Polish count, with a name made to be sneezed at, had been secured; and better still—or, as I secretly thought worse,—there was a fair sprinkling of the military, a class whose scarlet uniforms and gold lace have always tempted me to break the tenth commandment in a ball-room.

I entered rapidly into the spirit of the festivity with all the ardour of twenty-five; but alas! I found the fair Mary Anne hedged in by such a host of admirers that I began to

fear I had little chance of effecting a conquest. My native impudence, however, seldom deserted me very long. Encountering her for a moment in the mazes of a quadrille, I pressed her fairy fingers, and had just time to whisper, "I feel as if I had known you for years. *Do* join me in the next set." "I am three deep," was the hurried answer; but I thought the pressure was returned, and certainly the bright eyes gleamed on me approvingly.

As this valuable fortress was so closely guarded, it was useless to think of besieging it for the present, and I was reluctantly compelled to look out for "fresh fields and pastures new." I was busily engaged with a friend in calculating the probable incomes, chances, expectations, etc., of several other unmarried ladies in the room, when a certain amount of bustle became manifest, old Mun vanished in a high state of excitement, and immediately afterwards the doors were thrown open, and no less a man than Mr. Daniel O'Connell was announced.

It was not without emotion that I met for the first time in private life the greatest master of political agitation that has ever appeared in the world. I have never been what is called a hero-worshipper; but I have always cherished a warm admiration for ability and success; and where was there a more able or more successful man to be found than "the Liberator"? Baffled for the time in my aspirations after Miss Munkittrick, I drew as near as possible to the group that rapidly collected around the orator, and found to my horror that he was dilating, in by no means parlia-

mentary language, on my article of the previous day. Fortunately, press secrets are well kept, and though no man was more thoroughly conversant with all matters of current gossip than Mr. O'Connell, he had no suspicion of his real assailant, and yet I felt as if that piercing glance had read me through, and that withering tongue, so unmatched in vituperation, was engaged in annihilating me.

Old Mun was laudably anxious to seize the first opportunity of turning the attention of his distinguished guest from the subject of his countless libellers, and leading me to the front, somewhat to my own consternation, he said,—

“ You must allow me, Liberator, to introduce my young friend, Mr. Westropp. He will be ‘ called ’ next week to that profession of which you have long been the noblest boast and the proudest ornament. May the ardour of his eloquence melt the hearts of juries, and may the approbation of attorneys guide him into the haven of success ! ”

Long practice had made this ornate style of speech, which would prove extremely difficult to most men, easy and natural to Mr. Munkittrick, who now drew himself up with the gravity and importance of a man conscious of having said a very good thing.

Fortunately the tribune's moods were very fitful, and all the storms that had agitated his soul vanished, as he took my hand with a winning and playful air.

“ I am happy to meet you,” he said, “ and to say ‘ Amen to Munkittrick's last sentiment. We want you.’ ”

“Want me, sir?”

“Yes—you are a Protestant?”

I admitted the soft impeachment with a bow.

“I knew it; and we want the Protestants badly. They have kept aloof from us too long. Your country calls upon you and all her sons. Throw in your lot with us in the great cause of Repeal, and bring me half a dozen earnest young fellows like yourself, to help me to restore the Parliament in College Green in a twelvemonth. Oh, that will be a great day for Ireland!”

I was awake and sober, and yet such a proposition from such a quarter made me feel for a moment as if I were absolutely delirious. My first distinct impression was one of astonishment at the friendly manner of the man whom I had so outrageously assailed the day before, but after all there was nothing remarkable in that, as the use—or abuse—of anonymous journalism rendered public men liable to strange mistakes in their judgment of individuals. I smiled as I recalled Pope’s couplet—

“Pitholeon libelled me;—but here’s a letter
Informs you, sir, ’twas when he knew no better.”

Had I been identified as Pitholeon, all the water in great Neptune’s ocean would not have cleansed me in the eyes of the Liberator. I quickly perceived, however, that even the apparently absurd proposal he had just made might yet be turned to account. The crass stupidity of attorneys might after all prevent them from appreciating my wit and eloquence, in the absence of dry legal lore;—but when had

the profession of a patriot failed to secure wealth and power in Ireland? Agitation was manifestly the path to society, to Parliament, to the bench. And, trebly guarded as Mary Anne Munkittrick was by hosts of rival admirers, how would my chances be increased if I could show her and her parents that, Protestant as I was, I had torn myself from all my old associations for the sake of my country!

Mr. O'Connell, who was an early man, and often looked jaded at night, soon announced his intention of retiring, on which old Mun ordered wine, and thus addressed the little group around him:—"Gentlemen, fill your glasses. Only one word—Long life to the Liberator! May the mellowed glories of age compensate him for the vigour of youth, and may the genius that shines unrivalled on the platform yet rise triumphant in a Parliament in College Green!"

When this choice sentiment had been done justice to, Mr. O'Connell honoured me with another brief colloquy, in which he implored me to assist him in shaking off the chains of Saxon domination, and departed, having received from me an answer as satisfactory as a reporter on the *Retriever*, dressed in the borrowed raiment of the stoutest Tory in Dublin, could give. I should mention here that I had some talent for mimicry, and was allowed to be the best imitator of O'Connell extant—of which more anon.

My perseverance in seeking for Miss Munkittrick as a partner was at last crowned with success, and I did not lose

a moment in improving the occasion. I felt it desirable to lead our conversation to the subject of patriotism. It might not be much in her line, but she would probably reveal my new-born nationality of spirit to her parents, whose good opinion was well worth securing.

We talked of poets. Byron was very nice and sublime, Shelley very "flowery," and Wordsworth rather deep; but her favourite was Tom Moore. She doted on *Lalla Rookh*.

"Yes," said I, "it's very sweet; and then the Melodies. Don't you find songs like 'Let Erin remember,' and 'The Harp that once,' affect you powerfully?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I prefer the love songs."

"Do you? yes, they are charming—beautiful. Ah, what is there like love?"

"Oh yes—in a song," said she, laughing.

"Ay, or in real life," said I, eagerly seizing on the opportunity that seemed to present itself. "I am delighted to find you are not insensible to the tender passion."

"I said nothing of the sort, Mr. Westropp."

"But you looked it. And I could read it in your eyes, in our chance meetings at the park or the theatre. How those meetings made me long for an introduction! And now to be so favoured—to know you—to gaze on that bewitching smile—"

"Take care, Mr. Westropp. Captain Twycross is looking at us."

"Captain Twycross be—! That is, I mean, no liveried

minion of the Crown shall step between me and the dearest wish of my heart. Oh, Miss Munkittrick—”

“I declare, Mr. Westropp, you are not minding your steps at all. We have got quite astray.”

A whirl ; a circumgyration ; a pressure of hands ; query, any touching of the heart ? Of course I could not answer that, but I felt that I had not made a bad beginning, and must watch for my opportunity of finding Mary Anne in some more sentimental mood, and some more retired spot. Life in the Munkittrick world was not a bad thing, at all events ; and with the aid of bright eyes, excellent wine, and a sumptuous supper, I got on most agreeably till six o'clock in the morning, when in some unaccountable manner I found myself in bed.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIBES THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN MR. FOGARTY
AND "YOUNG DAN."

IN the following week I was called to the bar in due form, all necessary expenses being defrayed, according to promise, by my uncle John. My brethren of the press solemnized the occasion with a good dinner at Jude's, followed by a running fire of toasts and speeches, in the course of which my genius, spirit, honour, consistency, etc., became the subjects of the most extravagant eulogiums. All this was very pleasant ; but meanwhile my funds were at an extremely low ebb, duns were pressing and clamorous, and attorneys were an unknown quantity in my calculation. And while I had nothing wherewith to meet the whole threatening world, I had unfortunately contracted luxurious tastes, which must be gratified somehow or other.

These thoughts were coursing sadly through my brain as I crossed Carlisle Bridge about five o'clock on the evening after my "call." I was wending my weary way homeward—to mutton hash, and porter, and the society of my mother and sister. The prospect was anything but lively ; and I

never felt in greater need of something to raise my spirits, something of life, adventure, joviality—Ha ! who is that ? Old Fogarty himself, the well-known grazier from Ballinasloe, whom I had seen not long before at Conciliation Hall, in buckskin breeches, and mighty collars, and frieze topcoat, eagerly drinking in the torrents of vituperation against “the Saxon” that poured from the lips of the Liberator. Rich as a Jew, simple as a child, Fogarty was just the man to meet at such a moment. He was a most diverting character, and I felt instinctively that, in military phrase, he would soon “create a diversion in my favour.”

“Sharp evening, Mr. Fogarty.”

“Be the—and who are ye, then, that knows me ?”

“Ah ! I thought so. And yet you are one of the warmest admirers of my father.”

“Your father ! Be the piper that played before Moses. I’m hanged if I ever knew one of your breed, seed, or generation.”

“What ! Mr. Fogarty, do you mean to say you don’t know O’Connell ?”

“Is it O’Connell ?—Dan O’Connell ?”

I nodded assent.

“Be this and be that, young man, you’re on for humbugging.”

“Humbugging !” (drawing myself up in my grandest manner, and then suddenly dropping into imitation of the rich southern Doric that had so lately exerted its blandishments on me)—“Ah, Mr. Fogarty, the days for humbugging

are past. The hoof of the Saxon is upon us. The wrongs of centuries have to be avenged. Ireland shall yet be a nation ! ”

“ And who are ye then at all, that’s goin’ on with your speechifyin’ ?—for be me sowl ye haven’t told me yet.”

“ Have I not told you that I am the son of O’Connell—commonly known as ‘ young Dan ’ ? ”

“ Young Dan—glory be to Goodness ! ”—and he grasped my hand in a paroxysm of delight. “ Oh if the misthress only hard of this, it’s her ’ud be the proud woman to-day ! And sure enough, I was half thinkin’ it’s yourself was in it be the voice and the grand big words.”

“ It *is* myself that’s in it, Mr. Fogarty, and I am proud and happy to see that you cherish such feelings for my father. Ireland is awakening at his bidding from the lethargy of ages. ‘ From Cape Clear to the Giant’s Causeway, and from Connemara to the Hill of Howth, the cry of Repeal is heard.’ ”

“ Ah, then, Mr. O’Connell honey, you know a wondherful sight of joggraphy ;—and you spake so like the ould gentleman himself ! If I only shut my eyes, I’d take my bible oath he was to the fore.”

“ My dear sir, you flatter me.”

“ But come along, man. Be the tare of war, you must dine with me this blessed night. A son of the Liberator ! ”

And in his exultation, he actually cut a caper on the public footway.

“ I really could not think of trespassing—”

"May the divil renounce me—(Lord forgive me for swearin'!)—but you must. I'm stopping at Morrison's, quite handy, come along;—they must get the best in the house for ye."

"You are most kind, Mr. Fogarty," I observed with an air of considerable condescension, though inly relishing the prospect of a good dinner not less than the whimsicality of the whole personation. "Be it then as you will. My father will be pleased when he hears of all this."

I strolled on with him towards Morrison's, rather regretting that our dinner was to be *tête-à-tête*, there would be such fun in acting so novel a character in presence of admiring spectators. The O'Fogarty—for by such sonorous title did I assure him he should properly be designated, in virtue of his ancient lineage—was as good as his word. We had a sumptuous dinner, and over our brandy and champagne I fired him with wonderful visions of the future glories of Ireland. When we had the Parliament in College Green all rents should be moderate, all crops should be abundant, the alien Church should be abolished, and Irish manufactures should rival, if not eclipse, those of the hated Saxon. Mr. Fogarty himself would make an admirable member for Ballinasloe under a revised constitution. Into whose hands could the great pig and cattle interests of Ireland be more safely entrusted? Who could speak with more authority on the growth of shorthorns, and the application of manures? Who could throw a more copious flood of light upon the Bog of Allen, or bring the results of larger experience to

bear upon the drainage of the Shannon and the Suck? He had adult sons, too, and when the mantle of leadership rested on my shoulders, I should take care that they had the best of what was going. My countenance, my patronage should be always at the service of a Fogarty. Here a happy thought struck me.

Was it fair for my host to be thrown into a state of rapture by so consummate an artist as myself, simply at the expense of my dinner and my wine? Should I not obtain from him some more lasting token of his gratitude and esteem? In those days Eugene Sue's romances were teeming from the press. I was a much more diligent student of them than of Blackstone; and in no respect did they attract my admiration more than by their eloquent advocacy of the principles of communism. Lytton Bulwer, too, was one of my favourite novelists, and had he not deliberately chosen Paul Clifford and Eugene Aram for heroes? I had something of the good old Robin Hood spirit about me. I would cheerfully give to the poor—if I had it; but I was poor myself; and the rich must give to me. Was it just or right that this old man should possess a hundred thousand pounds, while I, his superior in rank, family, talent, and education, had not a guinea? Should I not levy a slight income tax on his vast resources?

"By-the-bye, Mr. Fogarty, that was an awkward circumstance enough."

"What was that?"

"You may remember, just as we were coming in, I felt a

sort of chuck at my trousers pocket, and saw an ugly looking fellow pass us. I believe I mentioned it at the time.

“Bad scan to the word.”

“Perhaps not, we were so much absorbed in our conversation. And now I find that the rascal has stolen my purse.”

“Holy Saint Bridget of Egypt, you don’t say so!—And was there much in it?”

“Um—not much—only twelve, seventeen, six; but still it’s embarrassing. The awkwardness is, that I was to start to-morrow morning for a Repeal meeting in Cork. The train leaves at seven, and of course none of the banks will be open at that hour.”

“Be the hole of my coat,” cried my companion, with beaming eyes, “I’ll be the proudest man in Ireland if you’ll take the lend of it from me.”

“My dear Mr. Fogarty, I could not think of such a thing—impossible—monstrous!”

“Faix you must now.”

“From a new acquaintance, too.”

“A new acquaintance! Arrah, get out of that! Is it the son of Dan O’Connell?”

“You are really very kind, but under the circumstances it would not be fair.”

“Fairity be hanged! A thrifle of a few pounds! Did ye never hear tell that the Fogartys always had a sperit?”

The present representative of the family, at all events,

was no wise deficient in this respect ; and I felt something like remorse at the readiness with which he opened his purse to me. Had he been a miserly curmudgeon, I should have accepted this loan without the slightest pang.

He handed me three five pound notes, observing that the "thrifle of difference was not worth spakin' of," a view in which I at once concurred. I gave him in return an I.O.U., written in a hand slightly disguised, as well as rendered somewhat illegible by my previous libations, the signature "D. O'Connell jun." bearing in fact a strong resemblance to the not inappropriate words "Do nocturnal fun" ; and so Old and Young Ireland parted on the best possible terms with each other.

CHAPTER IV.

EMBRACES A LEARNED FAMILY.

ON calmly considering next day the little incident just recorded, I did not feel altogether free from apprehension. The personation, no doubt, had been very amusing ; but our absurd laws would probably attach some degree of criminality to the trifling outburst of a communistic spirit that had accompanied my practical joke. I solaced myself, indeed, with the reflection that, in the somewhat improbable event of my becoming rich, I could refund Fogarty the money, and explain the hoax. But no ;—it would be wiser, in any case, to “ keep dark ” ; and yet, was it so very easy to do so ? I looked forward with no little uneasiness to the probability of my being recognized in the street by my late boon companion. I recollected him saying, however, that he had to return to Ballinasloe in two days, and for that brief period I contrived to be confined to the house with a severe cold. On the third I ventured abroad as usual, stifling all anxiety by the reflection that the I.O.U. did not bear the faintest trace of my handwriting, and that in the event of the holder identifying me, and

becoming troublesome, I should have little difficulty in having him imprisoned as a dangerous lunatic.

On the following Sunday I proceeded with my sister Kate to St. Stephen's Church, Upper Mount Street. Here a ludicrous incident befell me.

The sexton handed us into the pew occupied by a certain Mr. Shegog, professor of some abstruse science in Trinity College, and his three daughters. Professor Shegog, a tall, thin, slovenly man, with spectacles and a stoop, had the reputation of being a profound scholar—a reputation, no doubt, well founded, as far as regarded the outsides of books. He was grand in title-pages. He was unrivalled in the enumeration of editions. I question if the librarian of the Bodleian could have surpassed him as “an index scholar.” Further deponent saith not;—but mighty reputations for erudition have been built on even slighter foundations than these.

We were a few minutes late, and the congregation was standing during the performance of the *Te Deum*. Henrietta, the eldest and prettiest of Mr. Shegog's daughters, was laudably endeavouring to accommodate a person of such prepossessing exterior as myself with a position beside her, when unfortunately a button of my coat got entangled in one of those countless strings with which the garments of young ladies are mysteriously intertwined. I made a most graceful attempt to extricate myself, but—*horresco referens*—only succeeded in complicating myself more deeply. What was to be done? It absolutely seemed

as if Miss Shegog and I were embracing each other. Oh, misery! Never did I more devoutly wish for the shades of night to fall upon me. The poor girl in my arms looked ready to sink into the earth with shame and confusion, and, I regret to say for the sake of human nature, an unmistakable titter ran through almost the whole congregation. Jeanie Deans, dragged into church by Madge Wildfire, ambling and mincing in her fantastic garb, could not have been a more pitiable object than my fair companion in arms. There was only one mode of escape, and fortunately I summoned up presence of mind enough to take out my penknife, and cut the Gordian knot of my difficulties. Sunshine was at once restored to Henrietta's clouded brow, and, smiling her thanks, she put her prayer book into my hand. We stood together, knelt together—I had almost said prayed together; but prayer in such circumstances was clearly out of the question. Thus it was that an accident, so tormenting at first, was the means of establishing a sort of freemasonry between us, and of making me long for an intimate friendship. Should I not take advantage of the chance so auspiciously thrown in my way by fortune? Should I not embrace the opportunity?

The novelty of the situation had the effect of keeping me awake during the whole of a profoundly dull sermon, abounding in texts, and not containing a single original thought. After an infliction of three-quarters of an hour this vocal torture ceased, and "my beloved brethren" were suffered to depart. We left the church under the fire of

hundreds of inquisitive eyes, and giggled at by a multitude of professing Christians. However, we were all in the best possible spirits, and we hurriedly introduced each other in a scrambling manner, laughing heartily all the while at the singular source of our acquaintanceship. People, indeed, do so habitually sit close to each other in church, and then meet in the street as perfect strangers, that it is almost to be desired an accident of this sort might sometimes happen, to charm away their stiffness.

We joined our new friends in a walk along the Grand Canal, leading to their residence at Rathmines, and on the way I put forth my conversational powers for the benefit of the young ladies, with what I considered at the time no little success. I was in such high spirits after the odd scene of which I had been the hero, that I did not observe that these weird sisters, like their father, were rather abstracted in manner, an occasional "indeed!" or "you don't say so?" being the sole reply they vouchsafed to my most animated remarks. These and other little peculiarities, however, did not escape the critical observation of my sister Kate. Before parting, we rashly accepted an invitation to tea at their house for the next evening.

During our walk Professor Shegog asked me what I thought of the sermon under which I had writhed so much. As I did not remember a single word of it, the question was somewhat embarrassing.

"The sermon," said I, "hum—the sermon, yes, it was not bad in point of theology; but the delivery was too cold. I

am accustomed to the fire and eloquence of Fleury and Gregg, and I think these qualities are 'things properer for a sermon,' as Charles Lamb once stutteringly translated Horace's *sermoni propiora*."

I considered this an ingenious mode of escaping all discussion of the sermon. Unfortunately, however, the classical reference roused the Professor to a full display of his peculiar powers.

"Yes," he rejoined, "you mention Horace—a very gifted man. I have some choice editions of him. Our best translation of him is by Francis. It is surprising that neither Dryden nor Pope tried it. I suppose you have seen Basil's folio edition of 1580, illustrated by eighty commentators?"

"I can't exactly say I have."

"That is a pity; but I think I'll be able to show you a copy. They are extremely rare. Of course you are familiar with Baxter's edition, edited by Gesner—"

"Not at all."

"Dear me, how strange!—Nor the celebrated Glasgow one of 1744?"

"Nor it, either. But I am sorry to say" (looking at my watch) "our dinner hour is just up. My mother will be waiting for us."

"But talking of Francis reminds me of the great controversy about the letters of Junius. I have a hundred and seventeen treatises on the subject—"

"What an astonishing number!"

"Sixty-two of which—a slight majority—agree on fixing on Sir Philip Francis as the author."

“How very interesting!”

“I am delighted you think so.”

“But time presses, Mr. Shegog.”

“If you like, I can lend you some of them.”

“Many thanks, my dear sir. We can talk of the matter to-morrow night, but at present I must be off.”

I escaped from his clutches by a somewhat violent effort, and departed, having shaken hands with the whole family and favoured Henrietta with a killing smile. As Kate and I walked homewards, laughing over the singularities of the day, I could not help reflecting that my schoolboy “Anthon” presented quite sufficient difficulties to the student of a great poet in the original, without his troubling himself about recondite editions.

Monday evening proved clear, starry, and slightly frosty, and Kate and I were in the highest spirits as we wended our way to Rathmines. We found Mr Shegog’s house a large, well built, and commodious one, though we noticed many things in the household arrangements of which it was impossible to speak in terms of praise. Such trifles, however, as a soiled table-cloth, a chair requiring dusting, or a carpet in which holes are beginning to make their appearance, are little minded when everybody is determined to be pleased. Our new friends gave us a very cordial reception, and the effect of the blazing fire after leaving the keen night air was certainly most agreeable. The table, too, was strewn with a profusion of very appetizing cakes, to which, on the appearance of tea, we all speedily proceeded to do justice.

Owing, I presume, to their eschewing society, and living

almost altogether to themselves, there were some peculiarities in the manners of the Misses Shegog, and of their widowed father, which I feel it necessary to mention here. The Professor, for instance, kept two or three piles of books and pamphlets, probably attaining a height of three feet, lying close to his chair, and ever and anon he interrupted the task of hurried conversation to grope among these works, and jot down some remark suggested by them. The younger girls observed the decencies of society pretty well for a couple of minutes after Henrietta had poured out tea, and then Jane pounced on a scientific work, in which she became immersed, and Esther—"hazy," as she might be called—plunged headlong into the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold. Henrietta, however, kept clear of all such outrages on decorum, and smiled sweetly on her erring sisters, so I had some hopes, in her case at least, of the beneficial result of an intimacy between her and Kate.

Jane, having eaten a tart in a state of apparently total unconsciousness, slightly raised her eyes from her book and asked—

"What do you think of the theory of fluxions, Miss Westropp?"

"I—I have really never thought about them at all," replied Kate, colouring.

"Indeed?—what a pity! Then I suppose you are not familiar with Leibnitz?"

"I have never seen him in my life—ah—I mean—I have never studied him."

"Sir Isaac Newton and he," said Mr. Shegog, unconsciously coming to the rescue, "disputed this discovery, but Newton was clearly in the right. I have the latest French work on the controversy here. I will be able to show it to you in a moment;"—and he began rummaging among the piles of publications I have referred to. I need not say the question had no present interest for either Kate or myself, but it absorbed Jane Shegog's attention so wholly that in answer to an appeal from Henrietta for the sugar bowl, she immediately passed on a pot of raspberry jam.

"Oh, how I could devour Byron!" cried Esther, passionately raising her eyes from the pages of Childe Harold, and despatching a cheese-cake with a celerity that would have appalled the soul of the noble poet. This was too much; and my exertions to preserve my gravity were so severe that I could not trust myself to speak. Kate, however, had more mastery over her feelings, and it was with apparent composure that she said—

"Yes, his poetry is very beautiful."

"Oh, it is overwhelming—it pierces the very depths of my soul! Here's language—here's an image!

'The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture.'"

So exalted was her state of feeling that she actually suffered some hot tea to fall from her cup on her hand, as if to give a practical illustration of the poet's meaning, on a small scale.

"And you, Miss Shegog," said Kate, turning to Henrietta, "are you as close a student as your sisters?"

"Pretty much about the same. I must tell you I am a devoted entomologist."

"Indeed!"—Kate, be it known, was very weak in the "ologies," and confounding this formidable word with "conchologist," observed that it was a very nice taste.

"I am glad you like it," said Miss Shegog. "I have an extremely rare collection, from all parts of the world. Perhaps you would like to see them?"

"Very much, indeed, when quite convenient."

"They are all in the next room, and we always have a fire there, to keep them warm, the pets."

Kate was astonished to hear of a fire being required to keep shells warm; but she had been born, like Lord Derby, "in the pre-scientific age," and she was now prepared for anything in the way of wonders.

The moment the tea-things were removed Henrietta vanished. She quickly returned with a triumphant air, cautiously carrying a large glass case with compartments, in which we could see divers hideous things crawling. Kate started, and grew pale.

"I got some beautiful beetles from Sumatra—but the poor things died: the fact is, I believe the science of acclimatization is only in its infancy. But look at this—here's a beauty!"—and she produced an ugly bloated thing like a tadpole. "This is the only one of its kind in Ireland. Look well at it, for you may never see its like

again—(I am so glad you like my taste, Miss Westropp)—oh, but wait till you see the snake I keep in my own room!—perfectly harmless. My industrious fleas are doing splendidly too—and here, see here—” and in her enthusiasm she allowed some abominable many-legged things to crawl about the table.

“Oh, the odious monsters!” cried Kate, sinking horror-struck on her chair.

“You know, Henrietta, my dear, some ladies don’t like them,” said the Professor, reprovingly.

“Yes—but Miss Westropp said she quite admired my taste;”—and, seeing that a mistake had been made, she proceeded to restore these rare specimens to their glass prison.

All this was bad enough; and I feared that something still worse might be in store for us. As a pressman, accustomed to mix in all sorts of strange scenes, I derived nothing but amusement personally from the peculiarities of this dreadful family; but I could see that Kate was seriously agitated and alarmed, just as if she had suddenly found herself in a private lunatic asylum, and that a speedy retreat from the menagerie was necessary. Self-preservation was the first law of nature, and, however it might grate on my feelings to withdraw immediately after tea, the outrages they were committing left me no other course. I said therefore, that, deeply as I regretted having to leave them just as objects of interest were crowding fast upon us, I felt it desirable for my sister to have the benefit of the night air, as she was clearly unwell.

To do them justice, they all expressed regret for the annoyance Kate had undergone.

"I daresay you are quite right in walking for a while in the fresh air," said Henrietta. "It is an excellent tonic ; but I hope you will feel strong enough to come back to us in a few minutes."

To this hospitable proposal I muttered a sort of qualified assent. Forewarned was forearmed. I felt that the great point was to escape. The fly had seen what was in the spider's parlour, and did not wish to try a second visit. Fortunately we were soon under the stars once more, and as we departed, I inly vowed by Gog and by Magog that nothing should ever induce me to enter the house of Professor Shegog again.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH MR. FOGARTY'S OUTRAGEOUS PROCEEDINGS CALL
FOR THE INTERVENTION OF THE CIVIL POWER.

THE judicious reader will probably consider that the few proofs already adduced of my presence of mind and fertility of resources amply qualified me for the part of an Irish patriot. I thought so myself, at all events. Mr. O'Connell's suggestions had sunk deep into my mind ; and two months after my call to the bar I formally renounced the errors of Conservatism, and was received with open arms by the great Repeal party. During that period I was only engaged in one record, in conducting which, I regret to say, my wit and eloquence did not save me from being pulled up half a dozen times by Judge Perrin, for the irrelevancy of my arguments and my misapplication of the law of the case. My old friend Mr. St. George, with whose paper, the *Retriever*, I had of course ceased all connection, did not forget me. In his comments on my tergiversation in that journal, he basely insinuated—obviously referring to the episode of the dress suit—that perhaps it was not the first time the learned gentleman had *laid aside his old habits* to

strut in new ones that might suit his occasion for awhile. The italics were his !

Public men, however, must receive stabs like these with silent contempt. Fortunately Mr. O'Connell knew perfectly well what was required in his lieutenants. It was not by logic, and legal lore, and midnight study, that the finest peasantry in the world were to be coaxed out of the sinews of war—"a farthing a week, a penny a month, a shilling a year"—by which Ireland was to be made a nation ; and so clearly did the great agitator discern my peculiar powers that he expressly selected me for the task of addressing some vast Repeal meetings in Tipperary in the approaching month.

I was quartered on Father Tom O'Dowd, of Cahir, an experienced old politician, by whose advice I spoke rather mildly and guardedly in my first two efforts. I carefully followed in these the tactics of my great prototype by lashing the passions of my ignorant hearers to fury, and then, when they were ripe for rebellion, reminding them to violate no law, but to keep strictly within the limits of the constitution. Father Tom then told me that I "had taken out my eye-teeth, and might get on to my liking." That I was ready to play "the lion's part extempore," which we are told is "nothing but roaring," may appear from the following peroration to my third harangue, delivered to some fifty thousand ragamuffins on a slope of the Galtees :—

"Men of Tipperary, are ye willing to be free? (ay, begorra). Then, if you refuse to rot in the darkest

dungeons of the despot, mark my words. There is a cloud in the west no bigger than a man's hand. I see it gathering. That cloud may burst in a thunderstorm that will shatter the pillars of despotism to their base (great enthusiasm). Sons of the soil, you are men of peace, like myself. I know it well. But the god of battles never sleeps; the stalwart heroes of the premier county will never yield. There is a Nemesis in the future. There is a star of hope on the horizon. There is a murmur of freedom in the air (tremendous cheers). The glorious banner of liberty, fanned by the Atlantic breezes from Malin's Head to Macgillicuddy's Reeks, is unfurled before the wondering nations. The spirit of our ancestors, bold as a strong man armed, is ready to swoop down with avenging sword on the tyrant who would trample with bloodstained hoof on the dearest liberties of my country!"

Bully Egan's appeal to the jury not to suffer themselves to be "daunted by the dark oblivion of a frown" scarcely beat this. The multitude, however, delighted in a speaker who would

"Rend with tremendous sound their ears asunder,
With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss and thunder;"

and though my fiery words were (purposely) devoid of any meaning, they had a very rebellious and bloodthirsty sound, and consequently were received with rapture. I was escorted home on the shoulders of my admirers, to the accompaniment of brass bands, and amidst the tramp of heroes; and while the *Retriever* sneered at my "cheap heroism,"

and my "mixed metaphors," the *Firebrand* pronounced my peroration the finest thing since the days of Demosthenes.

Every one knows that the repeal "rent" rose in the summer of 1843 to the fabulous sum of three thousand pounds a week ; but every one does *not* know what became of the money,—nor do I propose to tell them. Suffice it to say that I found agitation a most satisfactory profession, that my pockets were now well lined, that I lived sumptuously at the table of the Liberator and his followers, and that the more I fattened on the multitude, the more hopeless did I represent their condition to be. They were serfs, bondsmen, down-trodden worms ;—but let them only contribute liberally to the rent, and Ireland would yet be a nation.

My growing success as an orator and a patriot naturally made me a welcome guest at Munkittrick Hall, to which the reader has already been introduced ; and as I flattered myself I was steadily making way in the good graces of the fair Mary Anne, and as I knew I now stood high in the estimation of both her parents, I was watching for an eligible opportunity of making "a bold stroke for a wife."

The last week of August had arrived, and I was walking down College Green arm-in-arm with Ferdinand Munkittrick, indulging in the bald disjointed chat common to young men, and every now and then making some insidious allusion to the manifold charms of my companion's sister.

“ Devilish pwetty gal ! ” lisped Ferdinand, fixing his eyeglass on a young lady who was just passing.

“ Very ;—but ah, what is she to somebody—somebody nearer home ? ” I ejaculated, heaving a sigh. The profound mind of my companion was slow in grasping the sense of this rather obvious question, in which he might be supposed to take some fraternal interest ; and before he could comprehend the full force of my meaning—the stiffness of his neck being, no doubt, a grave obstacle in the way of mental enlightenment—his attention was diverted into another channel.

“ By George, Westropp, here’s a customer ! This is the rummest cove I’ve seen this twelvemonth.”

This observation referred to a large, strongly built man, of very *outré* appearance, with a broad-brimmed hat, corduroy breeches, gilt buttons, and enormous watch seals dangling from his waistcoat, who was rapidly approaching us. My mind misgave me.

“ Be the mortal, that’s him at last ! Tare an’ ouns, let me at him—hurroo ! ”—And flourishing a short thick stick, the stranger, whom the presentiment of the reader has already identified as Mr. Philip Fogarty—just come up to Dublin to enjoy the humours of Donnybrook fair, and do a stroke of business in cattle—rushed at me.

The situation was critical. In many an uneasy hour, it is true, I had calculated on a chance encounter with the enemy, and had my plans well laid for repulsing a sortie ; but I had never imagined that my next interview with the

holder of my memorable I.O.U. should take place while I was walking with the brother of Mary Anne Munkittrick. There was a disengaged car at hand ; and my first impulse was to jump on it, and bribe the driver to extra speed with the offer of a treble fare. At another time I should probably have taken this course ; but flight just now would be a virtual plea of guilty to the terrible charge which Mr. Fogarty would be sure to pour into the ear of my bewildered friend, thereby utterly destroying my hopes with Mary Anne. The circulation of such a tale, too, must make me incur the wrathful indignation of the great leader whose paternity I had so playfully claimed, before I had made up my mind to enlist under his banner. It is in trying moments like these that coolness and readiness of resource are most needed, and fortunately I proved equal to the occasion. I saw at a glance that there was nothing for it but to present a bold front to the enemy, and adopt a policy of know-nothingism.

“Did you please to address me, sir?” I asked the stranger, with a stare of blank unconsciousness.

“Yes sir—I did, sir. Young Dan, indeed, the spalpeen ! —as much young Dan as I’m the ould one. I’ll ‘young Dan’ him—be the !—”

He could get no farther. His profane ejaculations were choked, and he seemed ready to burst with the violence of his indignation.

“This is a very melancholy case,” said I, looking sorrowfully round on the crowd that was beginning to assemble,

and tapping my forehead significantly; will none of you be good enough to run for a doctor?—a *mad* doctor,” I added, in an impressive stage whisper.

This vile insinuation had the desired effect of lashing Mr. Fogarty into a state of mind really bordering on frenzy.

“Oh, you villain!—that a ghost may bite me if he didn’t swindle me out of fifteen pounds, lettin’ on he was young Dan himself!—the misbegot crathure! Oh you notorious false prophet, when it comes to the great Fair Day of Jerusalem I hope to be put among the sheep at the right side, but as sure as you’re there you’ll get a horrible pucking among the goats!”

This outburst, so characteristic of an enraged grazier, had the effect of exciting uproarious merriment among the crowd, which had now become considerable. I felt that my position was secure, and that I could afford to treat my assailant in a spirit of magnanimity and mildness.

“After all,” I said, “the poor gentleman may not be as far gone as we imagine. He seems a decent person, and he *may* have been imposed on by some schemer. There must be some one in town remarkably like me, for I constantly find myself accosted in mistake.”

“Yes, he must have made some gweat mistake,” suggested Ferdinand.

“Mistake, the naygur!—And who are you, young man, I’d like to know?” turning fiercely on Ferdinand. “You look as if you were rared a pet. Who paid for your shiny

hat, I wonder?"—then in a contemptuous undertone—
"Lord save us, *such quollity!*"

Ferdinand now became the object of public merriment, which was only increased by the air of haughtiness with which he drew himself up, and affected to stare at King William's statue. To escape from a scene so humiliating to a person of his lofty pretensions, he quickly engaged the car I have mentioned. I got on it beside him. But before driving away I suddenly acted on a whimsical impulse.

"To show, Mr.—ah—I beg pardon—would you favour me with your name?"

"Fogarty, you divil's imp;—be the hoky farmer, it's yourself has it be heart better nor your Lord's prayer!"

"To show, Mr. Fogarty, that notwithstanding the extraordinary outrage you have just committed, I neither shrink from ulterior consequences, nor seek to visit on your aged head the results of conduct which seems to spring from some unaccountable hallucination, I present you with my card, in presence of high heaven and before my fellow citizens—thus":—

And taking out my card-case and pencil, I wrote with a back hand on a blank card the words—

" Doctor Ireland,
Stephen's Green,"

and handed it to the O'Fogarty, saying—

"There is my address. Please call at eight this evening, and I will devote all the leisure at my disposal to the investigation of this singular statement. Drive on."

I must here inform the reader that Dr. Ireland, a clever, good-humoured, and somewhat eccentric elderly gentleman, was physician to the Dublin Police force, a post which he held till an advanced age. I was very intimate with him, and we spoke of him as "our family physician"—rather a sinecure office, by the way, as he used to scold us for being so disgracefully healthy.

Two days later the Dublin papers contained the account of an extraordinary scene enacted at College Street Police office. It appeared that a stout built, elderly man, described on the sheet as "Philip Fogarty, grazier, Ballinasloe," was charged with being a dangerous lunatic, and causing a breach of the peace at Dr. Ireland's house. That gentleman's female servant deposed that the prisoner had called about eight o'clock the night before, and demanded in a loud voice to see the doctor. She replied that he was attending a lady at Kingstown, and would probably not be home till twelve o'clock. He then became very violent and abusive, called the doctor most scurrilous names, said he was hiding from him, and that he had swindled him out of fifteen pounds, and a good dinner, by passing himself off as "young Dan." Fortunately a policeman was at hand, and she gave the unfortunate old man into custody. The attempt of the latter to explain his singular conduct only plunged the presiding magistrate into a state of helpless mystification, and added to the already strong presumption of Mr. Fogarty's insanity.

Dr. Ireland himself briefly acquainted the bench that he

had felt the prisoner's pulse, looked at his tongue, and tested him on some crucial subjects, but that with the exception of this deplorable hallucination, he found him perfectly sound, although lamentably addicted to the habit of profane swearing. He had no vindictive feeling towards the unfortunate man for the annoyance he had caused his household in his absence, and he hoped that a return to his native air might restore the balance of the prisoner's mind, probably unsettled by the excitements of Dublin life, and the humours of Donnybrook Fair. He added that he should not fail to send down his own opinions for the guidance of Mr. Fogarty's physician in Ballinasloe.

Acting on this admirable suggestion, the magistrate took the defendant's own bail in a hundred pounds to keep the peace towards all Her Majesty's subjects in general, and Doctor Ireland in particular. As I read the report of the case, I could not help arriving at the conclusion that Mr. Fogarty had fared much worse with young than with old Ireland.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH GREEK MEETS GREEK, AND AN ALARMING
TUG-OF-WAR IS THE RESULT.

I CAN safely say that the autumn of 1843 was the proudest and happiest period of my life. While still in my twenty-sixth year I had paved my way to fame and independence, simply by gratifying the passion of my countrymen for vehement expositions of their wrongs. The delusive future lay pictured before me in the fairest colours. I have always held that, if there be any one power which a man ambitious of immediate effects should prefer carrying about him to all others, it is that of successful oratory. The influence of the poet, the thinker, the man of science, may be wider and more lasting, but it is exercised in silence, and too often finds its birth only at the grave of genius. The mightiest hero, after restless years of blood and toil, has but the barren satisfaction of knowing that his name is a terror to mankind. Perhaps the charm of a great singer is, while it lasts, the most consummate in the world, but after all, it is merely sensuous—

“ For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense ; ”

and when you remove the vocalist from the theatre, the concert hall, and the drawing-room, he is nobody. But the power of the orator need never slumber. He can exert it at all times, and in all societies, and can speak home with equal force to the individual listener as to thronging thousands. Nay, if his gift be of the right sort, he can, like the poet, address countless millions, distant nations, future ages. While laying no claim to this priceless power, I too was, after my kind, an orator, though but a wind-bag. I could hold vast crowds charmed by talking to them inflated nonsense. I carried about with me the wondrous Aladdin's lamp of "eloquence," as the frothy and tinselled word-flux so dear to mobs is called. And I was an Irishman—and twenty-five!

Writing at this time of day, I am almost ashamed to record the fairy visions I cherished in that grand climacteric of Repeal, the year 1843. Some ominous mutterings, it is true, were heard across the channel, as O'Connell's "moral force" demonstrations assumed such formidable dimensions; but I laughed all apprehensions to scorn. Had not our leader again and again said that "we had bullied Wellington and cowed Peel"?—and was there any reason to suppose that the Iron Duke would be more bully-proof in '43 than he had been in '29? No. All would go well. There would perhaps be some show of vigour on the part of Sir Robert Peel, for appearance' sake, followed by the usual rapid surrender. "The uncrowned monarch of our affections" would speedily be proclaimed President or

Dictator. There would be secretaryships of state going under him, and commissionerships, and all manner of good things ;—and doubtless the present reminiscent would not be forgotten in the distribution of the spoils.

Next month the bubble burst, and legal proceedings were instituted against Mr. O'Connell and seven of his principal lieutenants, who were bound over in heavy recognizances to stand their trial at the Queen's Bench. I found, to my great disgust, that I was not included in the famous state prosecutions at all. This would never do. Vanity apart, I had reason to fear that the supplies would fall off seriously if I were not openly identified with the cause of the oppressed patriots. Man in a civilized state is an advertising animal, and he who would succeed in this world must blow his own trumpet. No time was to be lost ; and next week notices to the following effect were extensively placarded through Dublin :—

“LET ERIN REMEMBER !

“Next Thursday night at eight o'clock a MASS MEETING will be held in the Round Room of the Rotunda, to take into consideration the present state of affairs in our afflicted country. The distinguished orator Mr. John Wardlaw Westropp and other well-known speakers have kindly promised to address the meeting. Fellow citizens, attend in your thousands !”

At five o'clock on the Thursday in question I dined at the Bilton, *tête-à-tête* with my friend Jackson, a reporter on the *Firebrand*, whom I filled with all manner of good

things, eatable and drinkable. Tumbler after tumbler of incomparable punch vanished from before us. Ah! the blight had not yet appeared on the whisky, any more than on the potatoes. When the duty was so low, it was perhaps scarcely worth while adulterating the article. Where shall we now look for—but I forget that I am writing as an historian, not as a political economist.

Homer sometimes nods; and Mr. John Westropp, reclining in his armchair before a blazing fire, was indulging in a brief doze, totally oblivious of the wrongs of his oppressed country, when he was admonished by a gentle tap from his companion that his time was just up.

“Yes, thank you—pass the hot water. What! is this you, Jackson? Oh, I see—I remember perfectly—perfectly. It is a deuced bore; but hang it, now that I’m wide awake, I’ll give it to them in style. Mind you report me *verbatim*.”

“All right. Everything you say shall appear in the first person, and the other speakers shall be fobbed off with a summary.”

“You’re a brick. Come along! A couple of hours will do for the meeting, and then we’ll come back here with a few decent fellows, and wind up with an oyster. Begad, we’ll make a night of it.”—And so we did.

A slight degree of unsteadiness might have been observed in the step of the present autobiographer, as he entered the Round Room of the Rotunda a few minutes afterwards, amidst the ringing cheers of crowds of his fellow country-

men. A good deal of hissing, it is true, was also audible, but I was not wholly unaccustomed to these unpleasant sounds, and had usually "a short way with dissenters." On reaching the platform a brother orator whispered to me, "The Orangemen are here;" and on looking round the meeting I perceived two or three hundred persons, for the most part of very fierce aspect, all carrying thick sticks, and wearing orange neckties. This did not seem to portend much harmony, and in a more punchless mood I might have regretted having convoked an assembly from which of course no shade of Irish opinion could be fairly excluded. But—

"Wi' tippenny we fear na evil;
Wi' usquebaugh we'd face the devil."

I noticed a well-known detective standing near the door, who vanished shortly after my arrival. Trifling as this little circumstance was, it afforded me no slight gratification. The authorities were on the alert. I had alarmed the Castle. I had not been advertised in vain. I might be crushed, indeed, but I should not be ignored.

An old farmer from Tallaght, named O'Toole, who had distinguished himself as a zealous disciple of Father Mathew, was voted to the chair; and this gentleman looked extremely cross and suspicious as my moist eye and erratic gait attracted his attention. But he had not the slightest real cause for apprehension on my account, for I never spoke so well as when "under the influence."

When this ancient swain had briefly returned thanks for

the honour conferred on him, and expressed a hope that we would do everything in our power to save Ireland from the murdering Saxon, some discordant shouts of approval were raised by a select body of coal-porters and others of the unwashed. The Orangemen immediately replied by the performance of "Kentish fire," i.e. a slapping of the hands three times in rapid succession, followed by a slight pause, which was always the prelude to a more vigorous repetition of this wild and strange note of admiration.

Matters looked stormy enough just now, but loud cries of "Westropp! Westropp!" turned general attention into other channels, and I arose to address the meeting, a somewhat difficult task in such circumstances. I began in a highly florid style—please call it poetical—which was not without attractions for many of my hearers, but was singularly ill suited to those hard-headed Orangemen.

"Fellow citizens," I said, "the year is in its decline, Nature is arrayed in her scanty mantle of withered leaves, the autumnal winds whistle through the groves of Killarney, and the reverberating billows thunder on the desolate shores of Donegal. (Loudcries of 'question' from the Orange party.) I am coming to the question, if you will kindly permit me. Let us imitate Nature in her mellow decadence. Let us be truthful in our policy. Let us be sober in our conduct. Let us shake off the yoke of oppression, just as we would fling away a withered leaf. Let us raise up a cry, loud as the roar of the Atlantic, for the salvation of our common country. (Loud applause, during which I observed many

thick sticks introduced into the assembly, and distributed among the coal-porters, who ranged themselves in a body close to the platform.) Oh, my friends, this is a solemn moment. Though the right arm of my beloved country is paralyzed, she is awake. Turning uneasily on her couch, she looks around and sees a handwriting on the wall, which may yet make tyrants tremble. (Cheers and groans.) You have heard of the monster of old, the many-headed hydra, that was slain by the fabled Hercules. Thank God we have an Irish Hercules, who is *not* fabulous! It is for the manhood of Dublin to take care that he is supported in his exertions, until at last the British Lion shall be crushed like the Lernæan Hydra. The Liberator of Ireland—(hisses and Kentish fire from the Orangemen, and uproarious applause from the coal-porters and the great body of the meeting). Why quarrel about words? My illustrious friend Mr. O'Connell is threatened with a felon's cell. ('Serve him right!' from a fierce ugly Orangeman, with the reddest head of hair I ever saw.) Let me tell you, my friend, that Mr. O'Connell has always considered your leader William the Third a great man,—but if King William were alive to-day, he would be the last man to rejoice that the necks of the Catholics of Ireland were trodden on by dominant landlords and an alien clergy."

It must have been those unlucky tumblers of punch. Had I been solely inspired by the pump, I should certainly not have ventured on language which I had long been in the habit of using with effect at Repeal meetings,

but which was ill adapted to a mixed assembly of Irish politicians. The Orangemen could stand it no longer. Maddened at what they considered an insult, they sprang from their seats as one man, and rushed towards the platform. O'Toole, the chairman, seriously alarmed, was attempting to suggest that, as I was the sole offending party, I should be handed over as a Jonah to the enemy, but his words were completely lost in the uproar. Even as the fortifications of Paris invited German artillery, so did the sticks of the coal-porters suggest battle, and in point of fact a general engagement ensued. While most of those present rushed panic-stricken from the building, wildly shouting, "Help!—Murder!—Police!" the combat raged desperately at the very foot of the platform. The coal-porters were much stronger men individually, but their assailants had the advantage both in numbers and discipline. I have seldom had such a bad quarter of an hour as that, during which I saw heroes falling, heard the groans of the wounded, and had grave fears for my own life and the lives of others. It is a great blessing in our Irish rows that, though frequently "kilt," we are seldom "murdered all out." I do believe, however, that the latter tragic consummation would have befallen several of us, and that I, in especial, would never have had the opportunity afforded me of compiling these memoirs, but for the prompt action of the detective already alluded to. On leaving the room, that functionary had driven hastily to the Castle, and informed the authorities of his grounds for believing that the meeting

was charged with most combustible materials. In consequence of these representations a large body of police was at once despatched to the scene of action at the Rotunda. They arrived, indeed, just in time to save life ; but even as, at the very hour of decisive victory at Waterloo, Lord Anglesea was struck by a ball which deprived him of a leg, so did I receive my *coup de grâce* just as peace was on the point of being restored. I had already sustained some blows and kicks which prostrated me, and was in the act of rising with difficulty, when a violent blow of a shillelagh on the head robbed me of all consciousness. I was carried home insensible, and fears for my life were entertained ; but I lived to be playfully congratulated by Mr. O'Connell on "the great advantage I had in being such a thick-headed fellow." For upwards of two months I was the tenant of a sick bed, during which I was afforded ample leisure for taking the whole state of affairs in Ireland into consideration.

CHAPTER VII.

MY DECLARATION TO MISS MUNKITTRICK.—STRANGE SEQUEL.

THOUGH I considered that unlucky scalp wound as one of the severest blows of my life, it was not without its advantages. I learned on my recovery that the authorities were highly incensed at the scandalous outrage my winged words had so unintentionally occasioned, and that the Privy Council had solemnly deliberated as to the best mode of prosecuting me for causing and procuring the breaking of some fifty heads of Her Majesty's subjects. Had I fallen into the hands of government in the first outburst of its wrath, I should certainly have found my aspirations after martyrdom gratified ; but as time passed on, wiser counsels prevailed, and the whole thing resolved itself into the most paltry dimensions. The fault had manifestly lain not with me, but with those who had chosen to take umbrage at my words. Much blood, it is true, had flown ; but it was hot blood, and could well be spared. Fortunately, though so much peccant humour had been relieved without surgical interference, no lives had been lost ; had they been, the

government could scarcely have winked at such a mode of decreasing the surplus population. I myself might be considered sufficiently punished by the serious injuries inflicted, and O'Toole, the chairman, who had so magnanimously recommended me to be handed over to the enemy, was the heaviest sufferer in the list of wounded, being crippled for life.

I shall not trouble the reader with an account of my sufferings during that weary and protracted illness, which proved most disastrous to my pecuniary prospects. Of the large sums I had gained by agitation, I had not eighty pounds in hand at the time of my misadventure; and this poor fragment soon vanished in household and medical expenses. Why is it that national gratitude has never invested a fund sufficient to pension off patriots in melancholy contingencies like the present? We are strangely fitful in our philanthropy. We have old men's hospitals, asylums for governesses, refuges for imbeciles, retreats for penitent females, homes for lost dogs, and boarding-houses for wild cats;—but Ireland, a land which has been so especially benefited by the self-sacrificing devotion of her sons, has never yet provided an asylum for distressed patriots! I may return to the subject; and should the suggestions thrown out here lead to the establishment of so desirable an institution, I shall feel that I have not lived altogether in vain.

My joyous, rosy-cheeked old friend Dr. Ireland, who has already figured in my memoirs, was unremitting in his

attentions. Great was my joy when, about the middle of December, he came beaming to my bedside, and told me I was "all right," and would soon be as well as ever, but alas! on two conditions. I should avoid all stimulating liquors for an indefinite period, and should rigorously abstain from speaking in public. Compulsory teetotalism might be submitted to for a while, for health's sake; but total abstinence from oratory! Why, oratory had been to me a very Pactolus.

"Doctor," said I, "this will never do. I shall starve."

"Young people must always expect that after a long illness, and there is no better sign. The appetite gets wonderfully keen."

"But I mean—"

"You don't know what you mean. Take these bottles as directed, and keep quiet, and you'll be able to eat a good Christmas dinner with your family."

"But if I have no Christmas dinner to eat?"

"There it is; you *will* wander. But a leech to your nose will settle that."

"Leeches be hanged!" I exclaimed. "Since I must speak out plainly, doctor, I tell you I shall be a beggar."

"You grow wilder and wilder. I must tell your mother to give you a warm bath this evening. It is always good in cases of blood to the head."

"Blood! Why, I don't think I have a drop of blood left in my body."

"That's exactly what I mean. It has all gone to the

head—a common case with men who work the brain too much. Put out your tongue.”

And the tongue on which I had to depend solely for a living was here subjected to the mockery of a medical inspection.

“Was there ever so provoking a man?” I cried.

“Let me feel your pulse—there—very excitable still. By-the-bye, Westropp, would you believe it? you were positively raving about me last week.”

“Raving about *you*?”

“Yes, and swore it was you that sent old Fogarty to my house to annoy me—ha! ha! ha!”

“What! do you mean to say I said *that*?”

“You did.”

“Oh, then I must have been as mad as a March hare.”

“No matter; you’re improving now. Take a blue pill to-night as well as the bath. The effect is surprising;”—and here he scribbled something wholly illegible for the enlightenment of a neighbouring apothecary.

“This young rascal is getting on famously, Mrs. Westropp,” the doctor cheerfully observed to my mother, as she entered the room. “But he must give up his oratory and his punch altogether, and if the improvement continues, I’ll let him go to the south of France next month.”

Thanking him for the kind permission, I slipped a guinea into his hand, an act which he evidently regarded as a strong symptom of returning sanity. When he departed, I indulged in a prolonged roar of laughter at his statement that I had

disclosed the Fogarty episode in a state of delirium. My mirth was not lessened by the suspicion that the worthy doctor did not consider my ravings wholly without foundation. He loved his joke, and I had observed a broad grin of peculiar meaning on his cheeks as he referred to the subject. But no man knew how to keep a secret better than the doctor.

Amid all my apprehensions of impending ruin, I was buoyed up by the hope of yet calling Mary Anne Munkittrick mine. Her family had acted very kindly during my illness. Ferdinand had twice called to inquire after me, and old Mun himself had sent me a dozen of rare old sherry, along with a basketful of grapes, and a short note, in which he expressed a fervent aspiration that my illness might speedily fly before the approach of Galen, and my eloquence be heard once more upon my native mountains. Did not all this look like an encouragement to my suit? My passion for the fair Mary Anne was obviously the cause of my intimacy at the house. Neither father nor son could be so silly as to imagine that it was the pleasure of *his* company I was wont to seek at Munkittrick Hall; the notion would be too preposterous. Of course the judicious reader will suggest that mere kindness was enough to account for the courteous attentions I have mentioned, without reference to any ulterior objects whatever;—but somehow it did not strike me in that light.

I brooded long and deeply over these momentous considerations, and soon after Dr. Ireland's departure I

ventured for the first time to communicate my views to my mother, a lady of whom as yet the reader knows nothing but the name. Unfortunately, I could not well have selected a more unsympathizing confidante. She had some high connections, of whom she was as fond of talking as if they had ever been of any use to her, and was deeply imbued with that pride of birth which (in Ireland at least) is never so strong as when it is wholly unaccompanied by fortune. And certainly the blind goddess had not smiled upon our family. I knew vaguely that our early days had been passed in the most dingy circumstances. Though not twelve years old when my father died, I clearly recollected that gentleman's mysterious consultations with attorneys, his moonlight flittings with furniture, his brilliant suppers and card parties, too often followed by his disappearance from society for several days together, his shouting on one occasion from the top of the house (too loudly) as an unwelcome visitor knocked—"I'm not at home—I'm in the Queen's County!"—and many other things which had puzzled me a good deal at the time of their occurrence. Now, one would think that, whatever her other faults, the wife of such a man would have been thoroughly exorcised of the demon of pride. So far from that, it remained my mother's ruling passion to the last. She had no objection to my associating with people like the Munkittricks, who gave good dinners and grand balls;—a man might go anywhere;—but as for her or Kate condescending to know such *parvenus*, that was quite a different matter. And now I had positively informed her

that I looked forward to an alliance with this upstart family as the proudest object of my life. Did her ears deceive her?

"Jack," said she, "I never thought I should have been ashamed of you. You can't be in earnest."

"I never was more so."

"And who is this Munkittrick, after all?"

"A wine merchant of great wealth, and of the highest respectability."

"You are so provoking. I know all that. I mean, who was his father?"

"Upon my honour I don't know, and it's not of the slightest importance. It's his daughter I'm thinking of. These fossil notions were all very well of old, but since the Reform Act—"

"I know nothing of Acts of Parliament. I leave them to you lawyers—"

("You lawyers!" oh, the unconsciously bitter irony of the phrase!)

"—But I *do* know what society expects, and what people of family owe to themselves."

"And I know what my creditors expect, and what we will owe to others, if I can't get a rich wife. I am reduced to my last 5*l.* note."

"I am very sorry to hear it;—but we have often been worse off still."

"And here I am, stretched on a sick bed, and forbidden oratory when I recover. It will just come to this, mother, that we shall be beggars."

"So much the more reason that we should have a proper pride."

"A proper fiddlestick!" I exclaimed in high indignation at her folly. Then, seeing the eyes that had watched so lovingly over me for months filled with tears, I apologized for the unfilial outburst, and quickly made my peace. But I was not in the least shaken in my determination of proposing for Miss Munkittrick, maternal disapprobation and religious differences to the contrary notwithstanding.

Filled with this doughty resolve, I had "a reverent care of my health," and by the first week in January I was strong enough to call at Merrion Square, to pay the compliments of the season at Munkittrick Hall. Though I knew I had to do with a consummate coquette, who had excited and blighted the hopes of many an ardent admirer, I went to war with a light heart. I was fortunate enough to find the fair Mary Anne at home and alone, which seemed a good omen. To a man so little troubled with *mauvaise houte* as myself, there was no great difficulty in coming rapidly to business. When Miss Munkittrick congratulated me on looking so well, I replied that the kindness of her father and brother during my illness had left the deepest impression on my heart.

"Your heart!" she exclaimed, as if in surprise, "I thought gentlemen had no hearts nowadays."

This looked like a disposition to meet me half-way, and I thus answered the fair challenge,—

"Ah yes, and in my case a too susceptible one. And

yet you are partly right ;—I may say I have no heart, since I have been robbed of it.”

“Robbed of it? Dear me, what a pity! And who is the thief, may I ask?”

“Can *you* ask that, Mary Anne? Forgive the presumption; forgive me for calling you by the name that is ever present to my mind.”

“Why, you are as bad as Lord Nelson. He said that when he died, ‘want of frigates’ would be found engraved on his heart.”

“Ah! Mary Anne, why this tone of mockery, when treating of the dearest affections of our nature?”

“There now—you want to pay me compliments.”

“I want to tell you that my destiny is altogether in your hands—that your image hovers around my couch, sleeping or waking—that in sickness and health I am always thinking of you.” This was strictly true, at all events.

“In point of fact, you want to make love to me. How very ridiculous!”

“Oh, dearest, language is too weak to paint all I feel—let me clasp those fairy fingers;”—and I took possession of her hand, after a slight struggle.

“You foolish fellow, what an absurd way to go on! And do you think I could have anything to do with a man who would always be making speeches, and going to public meetings to get his head broken?”

“Not my head alone—my heart shall be broken if you refuse to crown my hopes—oh, sweetest of girls!”—and in

the ecstasy of my passion I tried to raise her fingers to my lips. Imagine my horror when the door of the drawing-room opened, and a military-looking man entered, by what means admitted I know not. Perhaps one of the flunkeys had been "exhibiting his deportment" at the open hall door as this gentleman called, or perhaps he had knocked and in the excitement of the scene just described we had failed to hear the summons.

"Captain Twycross!" cried Mary Anne in amazement, as our hands parted company. The name and the face quickly recurred to my memory. When dancing with Miss Munkittrick at the ball already described, she had tried to check me in the current of my admiration by the hint, "Captain Twycross is looking at us," and now this "liveried minion of the Crown," as I had styled him on that occasion, rose spectre-like before me at the most inopportune moment conceivable.

"I beg pardon;—perhaps I intrude," said the hero, with a horribly convulsive attempt at a smile.

"Oh no, Henry, not at all; I am surprised at you—Captain Twycross—Mr. Westropp. In fact, this poor young gentleman got his head broken—"

"What a pity!"

"He is a little light-headed after his long illness, and he just seized my hand—as you may have seen. But he is not dangerous."

Though an orator by profession, I was struck dumb by the cool effrontery that sought to ascribe the vehemence of

my passion to a fit of temporary insanity. Women always beat us hollow on such occasions.

"Oh, of course, if the poor young gentleman, as you call him, is not responsible for his actions—that is another view of the matter."

He could get no further. He puffed and panted with rage, and drew himself up as though he were on drill. I too was literally boiling over at the impertinence of his language and conduct, and scowled fiercely on the prying and meddlesome intruder. Matters looked serious.

"Men are such fools!" soliloquized the wise Miss Munkittrick.

I suppose I did look like one just then, and certainly Captain Twycross had not the appearance of a Solomon. But what had brought him there? By what right did he attempt to step between me and my happiness, just as it seemed in a fair process of consummation? If he had the feelings of a gentleman, why had he not retired immediately on recognizing the awkwardness of his position? And why had Miss Munkittrick addressed him by the familiar "Henry"? I was bewildering myself over these knotty problems, when the gallant captain recovered his speech.

"I repeat, Mary Anne," he said, "I am sorry if Mr. Westropp's wits are gone astray. It is a serious assertion, and I am sure you would not make it without good cause. But considering that we are to be married next week—"

"Married!" I ejaculated in accents of horror, that must have made me really look *non compos mentis*. I could say

no more. I leant for support against the mantelpiece. The room swam. The floor reeled. The windows danced before me. Demons were ringing their songs of jubilee in my ear.

"The very thing I was on the point of telling Mr. Westropp when you came in, Henry,—without the formality of knocking. And I must say your manner to me was scarcely kind." She pouted, and seemed struggling with emotion.

The grapes had suddenly become uncommonly sour. "Was there ever such a heartless flirt?" I asked myself;—about to be married to one man, and yet—from mere force of habit, let us charitably put it—trifling with the affections of another to the very last! The reader will find later on that marriage exercised a very sobering effect upon this lively young lady, but I could not help often asking myself how long she would have encouraged my suit, had it not been for the singular interruption that had checked her while amusing herself by playing with my feelings.

I saw in a moment how the land lay, and felt that I was *de trop* with such a couple. Man of peace though I was, I longed to pick a quarrel with this man of war, who had shattered all my hopes in a moment; but of course I had no just grounds for doing so. There was nothing for it but to treat him with a dignified reserve, that should show him I was not quite as light in the head as had been represented.

Summoning all my presence of mind by a desperate effort,

I said with assumed calmness—"I regret, Miss Munkittrick, that Captain Twycross interrupted you as you were about to tell me of your matrimonial engagement. I wish you both much joy. You will kindly remember me to your parents and Ferdinand. Good afternoon."

I bowed gracefully, though ready to blow my brains out, and in a state of mind bordering on frenzy vanished with stately step from the hospitable threshold of Munkittrick Hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

I GIVE PROOFS OF CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF,
AND OF THE EVILS OF EXCESS IN OTHERS.

AMIDST all the vicissitudes of a checkered career, I have seldom felt so utterly prostrated as after that scene. When called to the bar, as we have seen, almost a year before, I was just as penniless, and just as uncertain of any provision for the future, as now;—but at that time I had been a nobody. Now I was a somebody, a well-known public man with a position to maintain. I was daily the theme of leading articles, scurrilous or panegyric—the scurrility being upon the whole even more welcome than the panegyric. This load of “fame” was delightful as long as I had a grateful country to draw upon, but how was I to support my pretensions when reduced to my last guinea, ignorant where to make another, and dashed suddenly from those airy heights where I had been revelling in the prospect of a wife with forty thousand pounds? Oh, it was terrible!—and not the less so that this valuable prize had fallen to the lot of a man like Twycross, who, as I speedily learned had substantial private means of his own. Somehow wealth always clings to wealth. But I gladly hasten on.

On mature deliberation I felt that there was only one course open to redeem my fallen fortunes. I must give myself a grand public dinner, in testimony of continued confidence in my character and policy. To that dinner I must invite eminent patriotic merchants, distinguished Repeal agitators, prominent conductors of National journals. A crisis had arrived, and a blow must be struck. If the elder tribune were threatened with a jail for his efforts to regenerate Ireland, should the base claims of the butcher and the grocer doom his youthful lieutenant to a similar fate? Forbid it, heaven!

Acting on this great conception, I did accordingly bring together at Morrison's hotel some twenty-five or thirty compatriots. The dinner—or, to use the newspaper phrase, the “banquet”—was an expensive affair, but, as will presently appear, I had invested my money (or rather my credit) judiciously enough, regarding it merely in the light of a commercial speculation.

Being a banquet, we did not assemble at the festive board till the fashionable hour of eight. I received my friends with all the cordiality of a man who felt that their confidence in him was unabated, and they speedily proceeded to show that they reposed as unbounded confidence in the cook as in the orator. The sacred rage of hunger appeased, the bottle began to circulate, and we “made some toast.” The health of the Queen was given, but in a decidedly perfunctory fashion, and without exciting more enthusiasm than a summons to the Greek grammar class

might awaken among schoolboys. To make amends, however, "the Pope" was received with the utmost warmth. Then followed "The prosperity of Ireland," to which the editor of the *Firebrand* responded in the most dismal manner conceivable.

After his jeremiads had received the due proportion of "hear, hears," the croupier, Mr. Feeney, rose to propose the health of the present humble autobiographer. Modesty, no less than a regard for my good friend Feeney's grammatical reputation, prevents me from attempting to report this speech. I have the pleasure of stating, however, that at its conclusion he presented me on behalf of himself, the present company, and a few absent admirers, with a gold toothpick, and a purse containing a hundred and fifty sovereigns.

Though secretly expecting some such agreeable climax to the proceedings, I appeared overwhelmed as much by astonishment as by gratitude at their kindness. Of course I felt "too full to speak"; and of course I *did* speak, frankly admitting that the prolonged illness I had sustained in battling against the might of Orange fury (hear, hear) had made the contents of that purse highly welcome to me;—while as for the beautiful gold toothpick that had accompanied it, I assured them that, whatever my fate, I should never pick my teeth without a vivid recollection of that night, and a feeling of profound gratitude for their kindness. (Loud cheers, and "He's a jolly good fellow.")

Other speeches followed, other toasts were drunk with

enthusiasm, and other gentlemen were also—I was going to use an unparliamentary expression, but I check myself. Modern reporters have to conform to the code of etiquette, and call a spade an agricultural implement. It is permissible to say that Mr. Boanerges was inaudible in the reporters' gallery, or that Captain Thunder's voice sank so low that his words failed to reach us,—but we must not hint for a moment that either gentleman was suffering from whisky and water on the brain. We were not so picked and delicate in our phrases in those days! I may state, however, that while we all had certainly "as much as was good for us," two at least of the party exceeded that satisfactory modicum, and the results of their excess were so comical that the reader will pardon me for describing them "to the bitter end."

One of these, Tom Archer, a noisy, humorous, hard drinking young gentleman of good family, was a senior freshman in Trinity College. He had joined with much heartiness in the Repeal agitation, more for the fun of the thing, and to annoy his relatives—all staunch Conservatives—than from any strong feeling on behalf of his down-trodden country. The other, Jeremiah Flanagan, a wealthy ironmonger, was largely impressed with a sense of his own importance, and extremely proud of his bushy brown whiskers, and his blue coat and white waistcoat, both of which, in accordance with a taste long fallen into desuetude, he had adorned with very bright gilt buttons. He was a small, stout man, at the wrong side of sixty, a substantial

contributor to the fund of the night, and consequently not a person to be treated with disrespect. But with disrespect, unfortunately, Archer seemed determined to treat him. As the night wore on, and the decanter circulated, this unruly disposition became unmistakably manifest, and I regret to say it appeared to afford the company more amusement than the speeches and songs that were rapidly following each other.

Having aimed at Mr. Flanagan two or three shafts from Horace, which the more cultured portion of the company relished all the more that they were Greek to the object of their satire, the freshman—"fresh" in more than one sense of the word—grew bolder, and carried on his assault in plain English. Putting his hands before his eyes, as if to shut out something, he said, on being asked what was the matter,—

"Now that I look closer, it's the old gentleman's buttons that dazzle me so;" adding, in a stage whisper ("half-a-crown the dozen").

"Sir—did you please to address these observations to me?" asked Mr. Flanagan, rising on his legs with an air of offended dignity.

"Sit down, old gentleman—no offence meant. I assure you, my dear Mr. Buttons, I have the highest possible respect for—"

"Flanagan is the gentleman's name," I mildly interpolated, "you will please address him by it."

"Thanks. Well, Mr. Buttons Flanagan—"

"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen," asked the latter, in a tone of indignation worthy of Mrs. Malaprop when resenting the "aspersion on her parts of speech"—"do you wish me to be insulted in this manner?"

"Certainly not,"—"monstrous!"—"shame!" echoed on all sides from men who nevertheless enjoyed the scene immensely, and were only anxious to lead matters to a decided explosion.

"Well, then, my feelings have been outraged. I have been miscalled—my very buttons—"

"Don't mention it, my dear fellow, I admire your buttons of all things. They remind me so much of Tim Doolin, my father's livery servant—a most decent, excellent—"

"Westropp!" roared Flanagan, "I call on you, as chairman of this meeting, to preserve order. I can't stand it, and I won't. Either this—this—this gentleman must leave the room, or I."

There was no pretending to misunderstand such a statement. I vainly strove to cast oil on the troubled waters, and I fear all our harmony would have been completely destroyed but for the interposition of my worthy friend Malachi Fitzsimon, an attorney in considerable practice, and an inveterate wag. This peacemaker—destined, as the reader will find, to get me out of more than one scrape hereafter—now drew the mischief-darting Archer aside, and whispered a few words, which seemed to have a wonderfully soothing, if not sobering, effect upon him.

"Good-night, gentlemen," he said, bowing to the company with an evident change of tactics. "My friend kindly reminds me of my duties. I must leave you, to consume the midnight oil in study. But though my body be absent, my spirit shall be with you still. Good-night, all—good-night, Mr. Buttons Flanagan—ha, Buttons!"—and with an unearthly grin, he took his departure, rather, I fear, to the regret of some of the revellers.

Peace was now restored, and while a sly wink from Malachi told me that that gentleman meant mischief, I congratulated Flanagan on being so easily rid of his troublesome assailant. Fresh songs succeeded, and in the excitement produced by mirth and melody, the company seemed to have forgotten the cloud that had been cast upon them, nor could anything surpass the hilarity of the triumphant ironmonger, lately so indignant. Meanwhile, Malachi Fitzsimon seized an early opportunity of slipping out for a few minutes, during which he procured a pair of scissors and a little bottle of laudanum, and shortly after returning he contrived to slip something into Flanagan's punch, without attracting any attention. That sorely harassed veteran, indeed, had already imbibed so copiously that he required little to deprive him of his faculties, and in five minutes he was overpowered by a deep sleep.

"Now, gentlemen," said Fitzsimon, looking at his watch, "don't let me interrupt your hilarity, but for my part I must be off, as I have a very important case to examine before I get to bed."

Vehement entreaties to make him change his intention were heard on all sides, but the attorney was inexorable. He said his business was of paramount importance.

"Besides," said he, "I can kill two birds with one stone. This sleepy friend of ours lives in Eccles Street, and I in Blessington Street, quite convenient, so it will give me no trouble whatever to see him safe home in a cab. Who knows but some harm might happen him if he were left to himself?"

This humane proposal recommended itself strongly to the convivial group, of whom Malachi took a reluctant farewell, and a few of them having aided him in forcing the unconscious slumberer into a cab, the two friends were driven away.

Having nothing but circumstantial evidence to offer of any transactions between them *en route*, I must leave the reader to draw his own deductions from facts about to be related. When the cab stopped in Eccles Street, Mrs. Flanagan was fast asleep. The door was opened by a drowsy servant, and the exhausted man of metal tumbled off to bed in the mysterious and inexplicable manner proper to gentlemen who have been sacrificing on the shrine of Bacchus.

At seven o'clock next morning he was awakened by a scream from his beloved helpmate. Racked in brain, tormented with thirst, he desired nothing but soda-water and repose, and now his wife's voice seemed to cry—"Sleep no more!"

"Molly dear," he grunted lazily, "can't you let a man alone?" And he attempted to turn on the other side.

"Why, goodness gracious, Jerry, is this you at all?"

"All that's left of me. There now, can't you let me get a wink of sleep? I never felt my brain so moidhered in all my life."

"Nice people you must have been among! Why, you're exactly like a Choctaw. What in the name of mercy have you done with your hair and whiskers?"

"My hair and whiskers!"

Pride feels no pain. Vanity can despise thirst and headache. The redoubtable Jerry bounded from his bed, "as light as though he felt no wound," rushed to the mirror, and beheld a horrifying spectacle. The hair of his head was cropped close like that of a convict, and while one of his much prized whiskers bloomed in full luxuriance, he was completely denuded of the other.

"That villain Archer!" he cried, "I see it all."

"There's precious little to see," returned his wife.

"I mean—I know the wretch. I'll have him transported, if there's any law in the land. Quick!—my clothes. I must call on Malachi Fitzsimon about this. I'll put it into the hands of counsel."

"There—can't you be quiet for a minute, and tell me how it all happened?"

That was unfortunately the very thing the much injured ironmonger could not do. There was an awful mystery somewhere. All that was evident was this—he had put an

enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains, another enemy had improved the occasion by stealing his hair, and that enemy must of course have been Archer, who had so gratuitously insulted him. His rage was increased when his wife, the full absurdity of his appearance producing its natural effect upon her, burst into an immoderate roar of laughter.

"Let me out of this!" he cried, when he had flung his clothes hurriedly on him, "I must see Malachi before he goes to the courts."

"But, Jerry dear, surely you don't intend to go out with one whisker laughing at the other?"

"You are right, Molly. Oh! this is too bad," and sitting gloomily down, he had to submit to the dismal operation of becoming completely barefaced.

This homage to conformity paid, he was filled with horror at the prospect of "scudding along under bare poles," as the sailors say, and accordingly he crowned his own bare poll with a hurriedly purchased wig. He then despatched a cup of tea, and drove off to Fitzsimon's house, breathing slaughter against the youth who had so barbarously officiated as barber on him.

He was fortunate enough to find the attorney at home. That gentleman stared at him very intently, evidently greatly bewildered.

"Why, bless me, I have surely seen that face before—it's like a dream to me. It is—no, it can't be—and yet it is—Jerry Flanagan, by all that's lovely!"

The ironmonger heaved a deep groan.

"Oh Jerry, Jerry, you'll be the death of me! Are you preparing for a fancy ball, or have you taken leave of your senses? What in the world makes you figure about town in such a disguise?"

"A ruffian—a scoundrel—a villain"—he panted for breath.

"Indeed? This is strange. Then you have not made yourself such a Guy on your own accord?"

"Oh, Malachi!—I'd as soon think of blowing my brains out."

"I thought so. Pray sit down and explain yourself. I know we all took a little too much last night."

The indignant ironmonger rapidly stated the case. A horrible outrage had been committed on him—of course by Tom Archer, whose general conduct had spoken for itself—and he should take legal vengeance on that youth, regardless of expense.

"Why, yes, there is clearly *primâ facie* evidence of an assault; but we must be careful. What witnesses have you?"

"Witnesses?—witnesses?"

"Yes. I need not say, Jerry, that in law nothing can be left to inference. All hearsay evidence is prohibited. What can you prove?"

"Prove! I can prove Archer was worrying me like a bulldog, and you all saw it. Retain the ablest bar you can get, and if it cost me my last shilling I'll be revenged on the villain."

"Quite right; very good. There is just this little difficulty of identification, and another matter. Let us assume for argument's sake that he is proved to be the guilty party, and we get heavy damages against him, how are we to recover a penny? He is a pauper, I fear, and is likely to plead minority besides. A fellow like that would think nothing of swearing that he has not come to the age of discretion."

"Then why not try it on the criminal side?" asked Flanagan.

"Yes; of course. But I must confess it's rather a novel ground of prosecution;—assaulting a man by shaving him. I know of no such case in the books."

"Then we might set a precedent," Jerry reasonably suggested.

"Yes, we might. There is something in that. I know you are a man of strong moral courage, Jerry."

"I hope so."

"You would not mind standing up in court before a grinning crowd with those bare cheeks, and that scarecrow wig?"

The man of moral courage winced.

"You would not object to a scathing cross-examination?"

The man of moral courage trembled, and turned deadly pale.

"Being probed as to your recollection of the minutest particulars of the whole transaction—as to the very words

passing between you and Archer—as to whether you were perfectly sober—by the virtue of your solemn oath how many tumblers of punch you had taken—six?—eight?—ten?—twelve?”

“Stop!” cried Jerry, jumping on his feet. “I see how it is. Malachi, you are a brick. I must start for the Isle of Man to-night.”

“The Isle of Man!” cried the attorney, lost in wonder.

“Yes. I hear there is beautiful scenery there.”

“Scenery?—in the month of January?—”

“Yes—no matter—what’s the use of talking about months in times like these, when devils are abroad? Oh, Malachi, I’ll remember you in my will. You have saved me from making a perfect fool of myself. After all, there is nothing like a true friend.”

Malachi cordially, and no doubt sincerely, disclaimed any extraordinary pretensions to a Damon-like friendship in giving wholesome counsel to this barefaced Pythias, but expressed a fervent hope that the Lord would temper the January wind to a lamb so sadly shorn. The unhappy victim actually sailed for Scotland that evening, no Isle of Man boat being available, left his pots and pans and fenders in the charge of his foreman for more than a calendar month, and lingered among the savage beauties of nature until he was able to put a new face upon matters, and, like Mr. Micawber, to “stand erect before his fellow man.”

Thus was Tom Archer avenged. Happy had it been for

our dignified veteran could he have taken in good part the frolics of that misguided youth. Oh, reader, who may not have a Malachi Fitzsimon to come to thy rescue, beware of casting disrespectful reflections on a great man's buttons. Vanity of vanities—all is vanity ! Verily, great is vanity, and it shall prevail.

CHAPTER IX.

A FOOL'S PARADISE.—A LOVER'S LEAP.

By the great public dinner I had given myself I cleared upwards of a hundred pounds. Compared, indeed, with previous receipts, this was a paltry solatium for my sufferings in the cause of my country ; but, coming at a time when I was so much out at elbows, it was extremely welcome. Unfortunately, however, my mother and I both persisted in living as if we had thousands at our disposal. As a natural consequence, my affairs fell into a state of chaos ; and in that chaos the hundred pounds so easily acquired, as well as divers smaller sums raised from discounters—a class of gentlemen whose acquaintance I was not long in making—were speedily engulfed.

The spring of 1844 was rendered memorable in the annals of Ireland by the famous state trials. I attended the Queen's Bench daily, like the rest of the briefless, deeply interested in the proceedings, though sorely vexed at not being myself included in the indictment. I chafed under the keen glances directed at me on all sides, every one of which seemed to ridicule me as a pretentious failure. In

swarming crowds, amidst deafening acclamations, I had won my spurs;—and here, in a confined court, and in decorous silence, I had to learn that after all I was *nobody*. Most bitter lesson! That consciousness stung me to the quick, and envenomed all the pleasure I could not but feel at the brilliant intellectual displays daily taking place around me. The incomparable oration of Whiteside, recalling as it did the noblest efforts of Curran, without his defects;—the brilliant and classic rhetoric of Sheil;—the masterly reply of the solicitor-general, Greene, to eight of our chief legal giants (and there *were* giants in those days);—the delicious spectacle of an attorney-general sending a challenge to a queen's counsel by the hands of a superintendent of Police, while prosecuting for transactions tending to disturb public order;—the speech of the Liberator himself on behalf of "the people of Ireland;"—and the final wind up on the thirtieth of May, when I saw the great old man striding haughtily into court, to receive the sentence of imprisonment so soon to be reversed;—all this, intensely interesting to the whole empire, was especially so to me. But through all there ran the bitter, humiliating thought that I was a mere spectator in this great drama. The eyes of Europe were fixed upon that court—the press, through its countless channels, was daily bringing the whole proceedings before expectant millions—and I, who had thundered on the Galtees, and made Clonakilty ring with my mixed metaphors, was neither one of the persecuted patriots nor of their honoured defenders. Had I been

right, after all, in anticipating the rewards of labour without undergoing its drudgery? Had I been wise in neglecting a profession that led to such great results? Dry, hard, stern, as was the study of the law, would it not have been better to have followed it up, yea even in a garret—to have stuck to it as to grim death—than to have gambled in patriotism, to have bellowed to bog-trotters on Tipperary hills, and been rewarded for all this waste of wind by money that vanished from my grasp almost before I realized its possession?

Thoughts like these weighed heavily upon me during that spring, and I formed as many resolutions of turning to law as a rake on his sick-bed does of turning to virtue—and kept them pretty much as well. I had made my first false step, and could not retrace it. I was to be haunted for ever by the Nemesis of my “fame.” I had drunk deeply of the brandy of popular applause, and was totally unfitted to fall back on the milk and water of legal study.

Meanwhile, Venus had reserved for me even a fiercer excitement than those supplied by Themis and Apollo. My successes of 1843 had induced large numbers of country cousins, who had quietly ignored my existence while I was a reporter on the *Retriever*, to hurry up to Dublin, and make themselves perfectly at home in my house. Most of these good folks were decided aristocrats, if the constant blowing of the genealogical trumpet were to be accepted as proof of the fact. My mother was only too happy to keep open house for such distinguished relations;

and the offerings of a grateful country imperceptibly melted away under the influence of their visitations. To most of them it is unnecessary to refer; and I merely mention in passing the name of one of them, Mrs. De Lacy, a widow lady, on account of her daughter Charlotte. That young lady had been studying in Germany for the last four years. She was to return to the County Clare when "finished"; and her mother was to send her to us in the spring of '44 to be initiated in the amusements of the capital. I must confess I had very little curiosity about her. I had vague childish recollections of her as a tall, dark, awkward, stupid girl, with whom I had romped a good deal in a period that seemed removed by centuries. Any one less suggestive of sentiment could not well be imagined.

The vigorous "autumn manœuvres" of Sir Robert Peel, leading as they did to the disaster I sustained at the Rotunda, had the effect of sending back many of my relatives to their western highlands, and my illness cleared the house of them altogether. Mrs. De Lacy, however, was good enough not to forget her promise of sending us her daughter, and early in May Charlotte made her appearance in Baggot Street.

I never was more astonished than on meeting her after our long separation. The grub had soared into a butterfly indeed. Tall and dark, as of old—but oh, how lovely! With such large, lustrous, eloquent eyes, and such masses of waving black hair, and such a queenly figure, and such

a delicate foreign accent, struggling ever and anon with a *soupeçon* of a native brogue that was more enchanting still. Was I right, as a sort of cousin, in kissing her after so long a parting? Perhaps not; but for the life of me I could not help it. She submitted with a blush, but without a murmur, and Kate laughed, and my mother smiled as if in approbation. I repeated this simple fraternal ceremony when parting for the night, and found that I had unexpectedly hit upon the great desideratum, a new pleasure. Punch and oratory, indeed, had been forbidden me, but Dr. Ireland had not said a word against my falling in love;—and that I was in a fair way of doing so the reader will probably infer when he hears that, on my mother unexpectedly entering the drawing-room next day, where Charlotte, with disordered ringlets, was seated beside me on the sofa, I disengaged my arm with great rapidity from that young lady's waist, and hurriedly ventured on some irrelevant opinion concerning the weather. It certainly looked rather suspicious.

There is nothing more singular than the thoughtless manner in which young people glide into these follies, by which they so often find themselves deeply compromised. I was never what is known as “a lady's man.” Though sincerely attached, as we have seen, to Miss Munkittrick's fortune, “a grand passion” was a thing wholly unknown to me, and I no more expected the approach of such a calamity than that of Asiatic cholera. Love was a capital diversion for a man with five thousand a year. But I had

nothing whatever to live on ; and was I to ask a penniless girl to assist me in making that nothing "go farther"? No. It would be madness for myself. It would be cruelty to her, to my mother, my sister, and babes yet unborn. Mill and Malthus were right. I must content myself with flirting with the passions of the multitude, and leave individuals alone.

But would individuals leave me alone? Here I found myself suddenly assailed, conquered, and led captive, from a most unexpected quarter. The dart of Cupid, winged in Miltown Malbay, had flashed across the whole island to penetrate me in Baggot Street. Fool, to think that I could escape the universal infatuation! But it would be madness to think of proposing, much as I should certainly have liked it. Bills on which my signature had rashly been affixed were flying about town, and my liberty was seriously imperilled. Was I to offer Charlotte a home in the Marshalsea, unless by some change in fortune's wheel I should be again supported by voluntary contributions, as in the previous year? Hating to think of my debts myself, I had never mentioned them to my mother or Kate. I dressed fashionably, went to dinners and balls, and kept a well furnished house and liberal table, so that Charlotte might well be excused for supposing that my success of 1843 had left me in possession of independent means. The Nemesis of my fame again! No; it would clearly be preposterous to propose;—and yet unfortunately our mutual attachment began daily to assume a serious

character, which could not be ranked as mere ordinary flirtation. I must come to *some* understanding with her; and what should that be but to tell her in private that I loved her to distraction, but that I was a ruined adventurer, and she was at liberty to fix her affections and bestow her hand on whomsoever she pleased? Clearly that was my only course; but to act thus was to swallow a very bitter pill, and I made wry faces every time I attempted to take it. I secretly uttered the old cry of the doomed criminal—"A long day, my lord!"

And thus did I continue to revel in a Fool's Paradise, from which I was to be quickly driven forth. Mrs. De Lacy missed her daughter a good deal, and often wrote urging her return; a calamity which we all combined to postpone on various grounds. She was looking better and better under the influence of the Dublin air;—she had some inevitable visits to pay;—she had not yet seen Howth or the Dargle;—and so forth. At length her mother became more pressing, and the last week of June was fixed on as her ultimatum.

It was idle now to attempt further opposition, and nothing remained but to make the most of the four days that were still left to us. On a soft sweet morning about ten o'clock we started for Wicklow on an outside car, one side of which was occupied by my mother and Kate, the other by Charlotte De Lacy and the briefless one. I thought this a peculiarly judicious arrangement, as it would enable me to explain at full length the unfortunate state of

my affairs, which I had hitherto concea'ed too long. If I wanted an additional incentive to plain speaking, it was afforded by a glimpse of two ugly, suspicious-looking men with big sticks hovering around my house, just as the car was crossing the canal bridge, and leaving Baggot Street behind. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." Could these crocodiles be in waiting for me? Horrid thought! The future certainly was overcast with dark and lowering clouds. The present, however, was very delightful; and as we rattled along the Rock Road, Charlotte's shawl spread over our knees, and our gloveless hands intertwined, we talked so much delicious nonsense that one should have the heart of a Domitian to introduce the bitter topics of debt and worldly cares at such a moment. Yes, the period of explanation must be indefinitely postponed. A beggar! Why, I felt myself an emperor!

The Dargle is well known to be a most lovely spot, and it is one to which I should strongly recommend all gentlemen in difficulties to avoid escorting penniless beauties. Talk of music being the food of love!—I would back an hour's *tête-à-tête* in that wooded paradise against the most powerful orchestra in the world. Charlotte was lost in admiration as the fairy scene burst upon her, and she listened,—

"To the eternal saddening sound
Of torrents in the glen beneath,
As 'twere the ever dark profound
That rolls below the Bridge of Death."

We carried our provisions down to the straggling

picturesque rocks, and gazed enraptured on the heights above. Then opening a hamper, we did ample justice to cold ham and fowl, and slaked our thirst from the brawling stream that gushed around on every side. In due time my mother, who was always disposed for a nap after dinner, arranged herself as comfortably as possible on a shelving rock. Kate, of course, could not desert her, and, opening out that day's *Retriever* and *Firebrand*, she proceeded to introduce the cares, and passions, and politics of man, into the sweet sanctuary that seemed nature's very holy of holies. It was impossible for me thus to shut out the glorious influences of the scene. Leaving my revered parent, therefore, to enjoy such repose as she could obtain, I took Charlotte's arm, and up we climbed through the magic scenery until at last we reached the spot known as The Lover's Leap. Here, at the dizzy height from which, as tradition saith, a hapless swain once sprang despairing into the woody wilderness that yawned below, we sat down, speechless with the tongue, but oh, so eloquent with the eyes! Ah, why had I not five thousand a year?

Some very foolish pantomime here passed between us, and noticing the warm tears running down Charlotte's cheeks, I ventured to kiss them off.

"Why are you crying, dearest?"

"Oh, how can I help it? To think of leaving you—leaving you all—all I love—"

"Never!" I exclaimed heroically, pressing her to my heart. We have heard of the converted toper who "treated

resolution" to a parting glass. Alas ! how was I treating all the wise resolutions I had been forming ?

" I never knew how fond I was of Dublin till—now that I have to leave it—to leave you. But we have glorious scenery in Clare, Jack. Won't you come and visit us there before the summer is over ? It will seem an age till I see you again."

" And do you then love me ? "

" Oh, so much—how can I help it ? "

" Then, dearest, be mine for ever ! "

Such was our dialogue on the wood-crowned height. Why should a beggar dream of love ? I had asked myself. And yet what else could a beggar dream of at the Lover's Leap, with those dark lustrous eyes beaming on him, and his hand straying through those masses of waving hair ? Enough : I was accepted—there, in that choice temple of nature, while the gentle summer breeze was rustling through the woody wilderness, and the birds were singing their melodies of love, and my mother was dozing in the glen far beneath, to the music of the murmuring stream, and of the principal leading article in the *Retriever*.

I was accepted ;—and in my tumultuous happiness I had not said a word of some threatening letters from attorneys that were lying in my desk, nor of the two crocodiles that had crawled out of the slime of the law to lay siege to my house that morning. Once or twice indeed, on my way home, I did venture, in the midst of our foolish transports, to speak of myself as " a poor man " ; but Charlotte laughed

so playfully and so musically at this capital joke that I had not the heart to pursue it further. She evidently thought it the modesty of a man worth twelve hundred a year, repudiating all claim to twelve thousand.

But she was soon and harshly undeceived. Next morning—her last day in Dublin but two—we had arranged to drive to Howth, whose bold and stern scenery forms such a striking contrast to the witching sweetness of the Dargle. Breakfast was finished, and the ladies were just dressed for the day, when I rashly ventured to an adjoining courtway for the car that was to convey us. Alas! I was not fated to return. The two odious-looking myrmidons of the law pounced upon me. The game was up. I was “borrowed” for the paltry sum of twenty-seven, fourteen, six, at the suit of the notorious usurer, Dick Ferguson.

CHAPTER X.

I AM KEPT IN BONDAGE BY THE SPELLS OF A HOSTILE MAGICIAN.

THE fearful anticlimax with which my last chapter concludes reminds me that, among other beneficial changes of modern times, imprisonment for debt has been abolished. I don't think the Repeal of the Union itself could have afforded me sincerer satisfaction. What a pity this relic of barbarism should have lasted till my time ! In my opinion the Act for the imprisonment of insolvent debtors might have been more correctly designated as "An Act for the better suppression of gentlemen who have no capacity for keeping accounts." Such, I readily admit, was one of my failings—a failing shared by far greater men, by Steele, Goldsmith, Sheridan, and countless other celebrities, some of them belonging even to my own dry and hard profession ; and I remember William Carleton telling me that he would rather write a whole volume than work a sum in division. Surely the dull fellows in their jealousy must have conspired to get this Act passed for the persecution of men of genius. I know of no country in which people out of school have

been punished for ignorance of geography ; the richest men I have ever known have spoken the worst grammar ;—and yet here was I, at a critical moment, torn from my home and my betrothed bride, simply for having no taste for arithmetic !

“ But you should have paid your debts,” some one will probably urge. I should like to argue that point, but it is so complicated with grave questions of socialism and political economy that I cannot interrupt the current of my history to do so here. I may remark, however, that judging from the tendency of much of our modern legislation, and from the views of many of those thinkers who mould legislation, the world is growing wiser on questions of this sort. The philosophers are finding out of late that land should be free, as well as air and water ; and so, I have always held, should money also. Surely its very title, “ the circulating medium,” implies that there should be no inconvenient restraint on its circulation. Let me give to thee, and thee to me, in our respective needs, with the freedom and bounty of universal nature ; when convenient, let so-called loans be returned with thanks, especially if the lender be really in want of the money ; and let the whole miserable array of cash-books, ledgers, I.O.U.’s, attorneys’ letters, and all the rest of the machinery for ruining unfortunate gentlemen with empty purses, be straightway thrown into the fire !

Meanwhile, it must be manifest to all men that no one can pay money which he has not got. Such was now my

unhappy condition. This cruel and ill-timed arrest tormented me beyond measure. Had I been sentenced, like Mr. O'Connell and his followers, for my services in the cause of Ireland, I should have submitted without a pang, nay, have gloried in my doom. But to be imprisoned for a paltry debt, at the suit of a very wealthy man—to have my trip to Howth, and all its anticipated delights, suddenly snatched from me—and to be robbed of that tender parting scene with Charlotte in which I could have explained so much that must now seem enigmatical, or worse—oh, it was terribly bitter and humiliating !

I have always been a diligent observer of life in its various phases, and at another time it would have afforded me no little interest and amusement to have studied manners in the Marshalsea. Inhabited as it was for the most part by a dissolute race, who

“ Spent their days in riot most uncouth,
And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of night,”

it reminded me in many respects of the masterly description of Alsatia in the *Fortunes of Nigel*. Razors were unknown in this happy valley, and though it was fully ten years before the free and unfettered display of the hair apparent was permitted in the British Isles, all the Marshalseamen were bearded like the pard. Many of these sons of Esau perambulated the large courtyard of their “town house,” as indefatigably as though rehearsing the performance of the feat of a thousand miles in a thousand hours. Others constantly occupied themselves in the healthful recreation

of playing ball against the lofty walls around them. Unlike prisons in general, this establishment boasted a canteen, which carried on a roaring trade, and was largely frequented by thirsty souls. While most of the inmates were swaggering, defiant, reckless-looking fellows, others were of a very different stamp. Here and there might be seen an anxious, careworn man, plunged in deep consultation with a friend, a messenger, or a legal adviser, and apparently making a desperate effort to solve the difficult problem propounded by Burns, how "to make one guinea do the work of five." Sadder still, there were sick, and deserted, and pauper prisoners, some of whose revelations, were this the place to give them, would be found equally interesting and pathetic. Withered, spiritless, broken-hearted, they shrank in their lair from the garish light of day. There were men who had been there for years, men who were destined to die there, men from whom the world had quite fallen—the great, busy, noisy world that seethed and fumed over its myriad interests without. What had *they* to do with the world? What remained for them but to plod on wearily to the end in this huge living grave? Yes, there were dark shades enough in this prison, as in every prison; but in those days my mercurial temperament made me prefer looking upon even the sullied semblance of the light;—and, whatever foulness might be hid beneath, it cheered me in my misery to observe that the general characteristic of Marshalsea life was broad, uproarious, reckless joviality.

Immediately after the receipt for my body was given at

the prison gate, I wrote a few hurried lines to Malachi Fitzsimon, whom, in spite of his love for practical joking, I knew to be a thoroughly sincere and useful friend, and soon received a note from him saying he should call next morning, when he hoped he would find me *at home*. Feeling no disposition to mix among the roystering denizens of the courtyard, I proceeded to fix on a bedroom, when I stumbled accidentally on my friend Tom Archer, whose animadversions on Mr. Flanagan's buttons had led to such momentous consequences. From my knowledge of this worthy student, I was not at all surprised at his present compulsory change of air from the academic groves of Trinity.

"Hallo, Westropp! you don't mean to say this is you?"

"Yes," I replied ruefully, "here I am; and a pleasant summer residence I have secured!"

"But surely you are not going to put up with us 'in town'?"

"To tell the truth I should prefer the country just now."

"You amaze me. Well, you'll find this a jolly place enough."

"I daresay; but, Archer," said I seriously, "I wish to live very quietly here, and to avoid dissipation."

"Hum—you won't find that so easy. When you're in Rome, you must do as Rome does. If you were not a man of such mark, now;—and yet—let me see—begad, I have it! If you want to live quietly, what's to prevent you turning Quaker?"

"Pooh!—nonsense."

"I am perfectly serious. There is nothing easier than dressing for the character. See here ;" and pulling a pair of green spectacles out of his pocket, he clapped them on my nose. Then turning up the collar of my coat, and folding my hands on my breast, he regarded me with unqualified admiration.

"You will do splendidly," he exclaimed. "Henceforth you are to be known as Ebenezer Pim, an unworthy member of the Society of Friends, who eschews sack and loose company. If I can only get you a broad-brimmed hat, your own mother would not know you. You have nothing to do but sport 'thees' and 'thous' on all occasions, and talk with a solemn twang. Oh, you'll find it perfectly easy. I know you're a capital mimic."

Nothing could well be more absurd, and I was in no mood just then for heartless jesting. And yet, strange to say, this whimsical proposal—which, as will subsequently appear, led to some singular results after my liberation—was not without its attractions for me. It would not only afford amusement to myself and others, and thus to some extent "quiet the restless pulse of care," but would afford me a plausible excuse for shunning much riotous buffoonery. Before parting with Archer he told me I must dine with him at five o'clock in *Number Two*, with some rare spirits to whom the company of a live Quaker would be the choicest of luxuries.

When he left me I sat down on my bed, looked around my gloomy room, stared at the barred windows, and pronounced myself the most miserable of men. Hitherto,

whatever my faults or my sufferings, I had always been a free man. It is true, I was familiar with the inside of a station house, and had sometimes appeared before Mr. Porter or Alderman Tyndall, owing to the perverse misconstruction put by the Police on a vertigo to which I was liable—a constitutional infirmity, indeed, inherited from my father, and attacking me principally by night. On all such occasions, however, a detention for a few hours, and the payment of a few shillings, had proved my heaviest punishment. Now, it was not a matter of hours and shillings, but of days and pounds. This was no bagatelle. I was a prisoner. The very flies that buzzed around me in that hot unwholesome air were free to go where they listed under the blessed light of heaven, and I, whom a hundred thousand voices had cheered to the echo on the hills of Tipperary, was a slave. The more I thought, the more wretched did I become. At last, seizing on the infallible resource of the miserable, pen, ink, and paper, I wrote at great length to Charlotte De Lacy. I indulged in the wildest rhapsodies as I recalled the impassioned scene we had enacted at the Lover's Leap the day before, to be succeeded by the gloom and misery of this horrible abode. I protested that the cruelty of Front-de-Bœuf, in attempting to roast Isaac of York on the bars of his dungeon, was eclipsed by that of Dick Ferguson, in precluding me from a farewell interview with my own sweetest, dearest, loveliest, fairest. I vowed that I was hers, hers only, *her own, own Jack to all eternity*; and I said that several times yesterday I had been on the point of explaining

my unhappy affairs to her—which was true enough, only I forgot the trifling fact that I was very far from understanding them myself. I then wrote a much briefer and less sentimental letter to my mother, begging her to call on me next morning with some clean linen, when I should explain all particulars. I had just concluded these communications, and entrusted them to the all-important gatekeeper to be forwarded, when Archer reappeared.

“Good news, Westropp!”

“Good news!” I naturally started.

“Yes; here is a broad-brimmed hat that I have borrowed from the jailer. Your costume is now complete.” Here he turned up my coat collar.

“Pshaw, what childishness!—And yet I suppose I may as well make a fool of myself. It is”—looking at my watch—“half-past three.”

“And we have an hour and a half till dinner. Come out for a stroll about town, to get up an appetite.”

“About town”—how the words grated on my ears, and how sincerely I envied the outer barbarians of Dublin!

“You know I must introduce you to some of your brethren in captivity. There is one comfort, you won’t have to dress for dinner in this castle. You can wash your hands if you like, though public opinion is rather against it.”

“Against washing one’s hands for dinner?”

“Yes, that is considered one of the works of supererogation.”

“Gracious heavens, Archer, are they all low savages here?”

“So far from that, your entertainer to-day is the Honourable Captain Bilkeley, a very elegant fellow, who stands a capital spread whenever the old lord waxes generous. Come along till I introduce you.”

With these words he dragged me along, wrapt in melancholy reflections, and little suspecting the ridiculous figure I must cut in my prim costume, as I emerged from my bedroom into the court-yard. A general burst of laughter, however, reminded me of the necessity of keeping up appearances.

The Hon. Captain Bilkeley, to whom I was formally introduced as “friend” Ebenezer Pim, was a very handsome, powerfully-built young fellow of about twenty-five, on whom dissipation had unmistakably left deep traces, but who nevertheless bore in his mien that indescribable stamp of the gentleman which even vice and low company could not efface, and which shone forth all the more brightly for its dark surroundings. He raised his hat courteously when introduced to me, said he was happy to hear from Archer that I would favour him with my society to dinner, and remarked that it was highly creditable to the Quakers in general that scarcely any of them ever put up in this hotel.

“Yea, verily,” I ejaculated, with a sonorous twang. “Truly the friends are wise in their generation. They love not to acclimatize themselves in these latitudes.” Here

I drew myself up stiffly, folded my hands on my breast, and looked grimly through my green glasses on a grinning group, some of whom would probably have recognized such a well-known public man as Jack Westropp, but for this change of name, and disguise of dress, voice, and manner.

Though an excellent dinner was provided for us, Captain Bilkeley being just then in funds, nothing could be less tempting than the *salle-à-manger*. "Number Two," in which we dined, was a long, low, narrow room, with one strongly barred window, and walls that had probably not been whitewashed for several years. Its close stifling air was rendered trebly foul by the fumes of stale tobacco, and as the bearded brethren ranged themselves in helter-skelter fashion around a deal table, covered by a cloth that had evidently seen much service since its last washing, my heart sank within me. My thoughts involuntarily turned to the bewitching scenery in which I had spent the day before, and the still more bewitching tones and glances of my lovely companion, and I felt that a dry crust in my own bedroom would be preferable to a stalled ox eaten amidst such surroundings.

The captain having hastily muttered an inarticulate grace, we fell to at the viands with considerable zest, and as "*l'appétit vient en mangeant*," I soon overcame my feelings of repugnance, and entered with hilarity into the spirit of the scene. We lost no time in satisfying our grosser needs, and as the sherry briskly circulated, I felt with some degree of importance that Ebenezer Pim was regarded as an

object of general interest. The guests did their best to draw me out, with the view of turning the peculiarities of "friends" into derision, and I took very good care to retaliate, by carrying the war into the enemy's camp. When Peter O'Riordan, for instance, a devout son of mother Church, sneered at "the spirit moving me," and hinted broadly that he considered all Quakers hypocrites, I turned my green spectacles on him, and solemnly anathematized the errors of Popery, with many moving allusions to the man of sin, the mark of the beast, the mystical number 666, etc. These sallies were received with hearty laughter by Catholics and Protestants alike. On polemical subjects, however, it is always desirable "to balance fair in ilka quarter," even in a prison, and I had been a warm advocate for what is called "religious equality" long before it suited English parties to make it a convenient battle cry. When Benjamin Hozack, therefore, a very ferocious Orangeman, whom I had noted as peculiarly prominent among my assailants at the Rotunda last October, indulged in some coarse jokes on finding O'Riordan disconcerted, I resolved to crush him still more effectually.

"Truly, friend Hozack," said I, "thy remarks are unbecoming. They savour of the old Adam. I fear thou art one of those who resort to the carnal arm, and walk with men of wrath and violence, even with those who call themselves Orangemen."

"Bravo, Jonathan!"—"Pitch into him!"—"That's the real Simon Pure!"—and similar cries resounded on all

sides, amidst a deafening din of laughter and rapping of spoons on the table.

“William the Third was one of the most glorious heroes that ever lived,” cried Hozack, boiling with indignation.

“The man William,” I replied, “did much good in his day, but what good do his followers do? Are they not brawlers, disturbers of the peace, partisans, players of profane tunes?”

“It’s well for you you are a Quaker,” interrupted the angry Orangeman, seeing the mirth of the company increasing, and at his expense. “If you were not a man of peace—”

“Nay, friend Hozack, if thou desirest it, I will fight thee a round after breakfast to-morrow morning; but at present, I pray thee, let there be peace between thee and me.”

This exhibition of spirit was vehemently applauded on all sides, and Hozack, whose courage was somewhat of the Bobadil order, speedily repudiated all bloodthirsty intentions, so that harmony was restored immediately. The dinner things having been removed, Captain Bilkeley produced several bottles of whisky, and as the guests proceeded to mix their punch, and to indulge at the same time in the luxury of pipes and cigars, the room was quickly filled with dense volumes of vapour. I felt it only consistent with the gravity of my character to enter a protest against intoxicating liquor.

“The poison!” I exclaimed, making a very wry face, as a bottle was passed round to me. “Take it away, my friends.”

“Try a little, Aminadab”—“You’ll find it good for your complaint, Solomon”—and similar hospitable appeals resounded round the table. At last I allowed myself to be over persuaded, and mixed a little, as I said by way of experiment, and in order to be able more clearly to expose its pernicious effects. I could glean from the stage whispers of the company that a very general desire prevailed to see the Quaker “screwed,” a gratification which I was firmly resolved not to afford them. The hospitable captain vainly tried to divert these semi-savages from their frolicsome persecution of his grave and sober guest. They were a very mercurial race, however. Their attention was seldom long directed to any one subject, and before I had succeeded in ascertaining all the evil qualities latent in a tumbler of punch, public interest was concentrated on a grand scheme propounded by a hopelessly insolvent trader, for the readjustment of the incidence of imperial taxation, and the rapid extinction of the national debt.

As I took no interest just then in any Sinking Fund but my own, I pleaded headache, and quietly stole forth into the open air. My headache was partly real, partly assumed, but I soon banished it with a cup of coffee, and leaving the wretched revellers to their “tipsy mirth and jollity,” which was now swelling high, I strode smartly round the almost deserted court-yard, in the hope that rapid exercise would bring rest to my weary brain, and make me sleep in spite of myself. Ah me! the lion in a menagerie is a sad object, after all. Where were the mountains of Tipperary?—where

were the cliffs of Clare?—where were the applauding myriads?—where was the wooded Dargle?—where was the peerless Charlotte?—and above all, where, oh! where was the money to pay Dick Ferguson's bill?

After walking about half an hour, asking myself these bitter questions, I heard a low growl, and was startled by seeing a large hound steal forth from a corner of the courtyard, followed by a pallid, careworn man, who raised his hat politely, and said,—

“Don't be uneasy, sir; poor old Cæsar won't touch you. He is the quietest animal in the world, though he has not forgotten how to growl; but he would fly at you in a moment if he took it into his head that you wanted to injure me. Thank God, I have still a friend left, even here.”

There was something very interesting about this stranger, with whom I at once entered into familiar conversation, discarding all my “thees” and “thous,” and giving him my real name. I found him to be a gentleman and scholar. His father, Major Miller, a magistrate for a western county, had passed a life of reckless dissipation, and had not only irretrievably wasted his own fortune, but dragged his son headlong with him down the road of ruin. For six long weary years he had pined in this abode of wretchedness and he looked fully fifty years of age, though he assured me he was only thirty-four. Some friends used to visit and assist him at first, but gradually they all dropped off. With their departure his interest in the affairs of the outer world

completely vanished, and he had long since lost all care for that liberty which he would not know how to use.

“It is not a pleasant life, certainly,” he said, “to be always looking at your tomb, and walking about it;—but it has its compensations. While I am left Cæsar I am content; and when I die, he will not survive me long.”

I found such a melancholy satisfaction just then in conversing with a man whose lot was so much sadder than my own, that I felt unwilling to leave him, and we protracted our dialogue till the rising moon warned us to separate for the night. To vegetate for years in that wretched spot—to know that in very truth your prison-house must become your charnel-house—to be fated to perish there, unloved, unwept, unknown—heavens, what a doom!

I was deeply moved by this page from the tragic records of life in the Marshalsea. I was no moralist then (whatever I may be now), and, fresh from the wild revels that constituted its comic side, I could not see that that frantic debauchery of ruined men, that fiddling of Nero while Rome was burning, that ghastly rioting over the grave of character, hope, and peace, had something in it sadder still.

Fortunately I had slept but little the night before, thinking of the exciting love passages of the day, and of other matters of less pleasing interest. I was now very tired, and my hard pallet was crowned with the blessings of oblivion much sooner than I could have hoped. My sleep was long and sound. About seven next morning I fell into a

delightful dream, in which Charlotte De Lacy and I wandered over the Hill of Howth to its most picturesque extremity, seated ourselves on a slope overhanging the sea, and proceeded to repeat the agreeable programme that had proved so satisfactory to both of us when rehearsing it at the Lover's Leap. Suddenly, by one of those magical metamorphoses known only to nightmares, the Bailey Lighthouse was changed into the Old Bailey of London. Charlotte in an equally unaccountable manner became transformed into a grim-looking jailer, who seized me violently by the throat, and, turning on the other side with a groan, I awoke to misery and the Marshalsea.

CHAPTER XI.

I INVOKE THE AID OF A POTENT ENCHANTER TO BREAK
THE SPELL.

I FORMED the speedy resolution of discarding the absurd mummery of a Quaker's disguise, and strolled forth among my wondering fellow captives in my real character. I had just despatched a hurried breakfast, and was endeavouring to fix my distracted thoughts on the *Firebrand* of the day, when my mother made her appearance.

Alas, she was alone! It was shockingly unfilial and ungrateful of me, no doubt, but though she put into my hand £3 10s., which she had just scraped together in some mysterious manner, and told me to make myself as comfortable as possible with it, I could not suppress my disappointment at not being able to take a tender farewell of Charlotte.

"Why didn't you bring her—and Kate?" I asked.

"Nonsense!—you really surprise me. Bring young ladies into such a savage den as this? Why, one glance at the horrid hairy-faced men outside there would frighten any decent girl out of her wits!" And, as if to justify this

strong assertion, a wild howl, resembling an Indian war-whoop, burst from a half-drunken desperado below, and rang appallingly through our ears.

"It is certainly rather an unpleasant place," I said ruefully.

"And yet you must go and engage yourself to a penniless girl, knowing well—"

"Not knowing I was to come here, mother—not thinking of it for a moment. Believe that. And so darling Charlotte has told you all?—I was very rash, I admit—very foolish ; but—"

"Well, well, there is no use in talking about it now. I suppose we can't put grey heads on green shoulders. There is one comfort—she is *a lady*, at all events, not like your *Munkittricks*."

Her contemptuous emphasis on the last word was most marked. Those grapes in Merrion Square had proved sour, it is true, nearly six months ago ;—and yet I could not but secretly admit that forty thousand pounds would be much more useful in my present plight than any amount of dignity or "blood."

While thus conversing, the anxiously expected Malachi Fitzsimon joined us. This friend in need told me that he had procured an interview the day before with Dick Ferguson, on whom he had strongly impressed my utter and hopeless insolvency, saying that if he pushed matters to extremities, he would find my assets to amount to something very like nothing in the pound.

"God forgive all liars, Jack," said he, "but I told him that your furniture consisted of a few broken old chairs and tables that would not fetch thirty shillings in Liffey Street. It was as much for the fun of putting my finger in such a knowing old schemer's eye as of doing you a good turn."

"You are a trump. And what did he say?"

"He fought hard, and was very indignant. He said he had heard most beautiful speeches from you, and what use was all your oratory if it did not enable you to pay your lawful debts—and you an unmarried man, too." (Here the orator winced.) "I explained that it was the dead season in oratory. We had a spring tide last year, and this was the ebb."

"And did you melt him at last, dear Mr. Fitzsimon?" my mother asked, beginning to cry.

"I said he might have the pound of flesh if he liked, and of course there was no accounting for tastes, but for my part I would rather have half a loaf than no bread,—and I was just moving away when he called me back. How much could we manage to pay?—twenty-five pounds? Nonsense. Twenty? Impossible. Eighteen? I shook my head. At last, under tremendous pressure, he consented to let you out and give up the bill, if we could let him have fifteen pounds this week—"

"Bravo, Malachi!"

"But another bill of yours would fall due shortly, and he swore he should have full value for it. Now, Jack, I must tell you plainly how the land lies. You don't know what

you owe, and if you get out now debt after debt will keep turning up, and I shall have fresh battles to fight. If you can manage to raise, say a hundred pounds, and leave it in my hands, I will guarantee your safety for some time, at least till you get a rich wife, or an appointment of some sort. But mind—you must live within your means, whatever they are. No fresh debts in the future, or I am done with you."

Most excellent advice, albeit strongly resembling that given by the physicians to Sir Walter Scott in his declining years to cease from literary labour, and met by the playful simile of Polly putting the kettle on, and saying—"Now, don't boil." People *will* try to keep out the tide with a pitch fork. Avoid debt—Jack Westropp, avoid debt!

Malachi and my mother departed together, and then I sat down on my bed, and remained for half an hour plunged in profound reflection. Raise a hundred pounds?—Yes; or conquer Russia; one seemed about as likely as the other. My insolvent friend of the night before, broaching his grand theory for the extinction of the national debt, seemed a highly practical financier in comparison. And yet, somehow or other, it must be done. The word "impossible" must not be found in my vocabulary. It is true that, as I recalled to memory various former sources of supply, I had to own that they were all dried up. From Dame Street to Drumcondra all was barren. From Baggot Street to Ballybough Bridge all my friends had become men of little faith. From Merrion Square—but I paused

there. What about Munkittrick? He was a man of vast wealth, at whose house I had been an honoured guest, who had uttered beautiful sentiments in my praise, and who had sent me sweet grapes during my illness. Ah, but the sour grapes! I could not forget them. I had been most miserably jilted by that consummate flirt, Mary Ann. What! should Captain Twycross amuse his friends with stories of the bankrupt patriot, who had vainly aspired to the hand of the great heiress, begging her father to assist him in his dire extremity, and perhaps begging in vain? Perish the thought! I had little of my mother's absurd pride, but I must confess this was too much for me. And then my busy brain conceived a scheme of extraordinary audacity, the wildness of which made me laugh at first, though on further reflection it seemed by no means so chimerical; and bracing myself for a great effort, I wrote the following letter:—

“To Philip Fogarty, Esq.,

“Grazier, etc.,

“Ballinasloe.

“Four Courts Marshalsea, Dublin.

“DEAR SIR,—You will doubtless be surprised at hearing from a perfect stranger, and still more at my writing from this horrid place. But the fame of my exertions for Ireland may have reached your ears; for, as Æneas touchingly asks—

‘Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?’

Briefly, I am the victim of circumstances over which I have

no control. In my struggles for fatherland I have already wasted all my means, and am now cooped up here for a miserable debt, which a hundred pounds sent to my solicitor, Mr. Malachi Fitzsimon, 43, Dame Street, Dublin, would promptly satisfy. Is Ireland yet to be a nation? Certainly not, if her martyred sons are to be shut out from the glorious radiance of the god of day. I need not say that if the Liberator were at large, ten times that sum would be forthcoming for my aid in a moment; but the horrible malignity of the Saxon oppressor has thrust him and seven of Erin's noblest sons into a dungeon, at the very time that the harpies of the law have swooped down upon me. I have no claim upon you; I know that full well. And yet methinks as I recall the sight of your stalwart figure at Repeal meetings, as I remember your noble enthusiasm in the cause of patriotism, I am convinced you will not refuse me this boon. Is it not the voice of the guardian genius of Erin that prompts me to write these few hurried distracted lines, torn from the depths of a bleeding heart? Oh, my friend, we may yet be free! We may yet have another, and a more successful, 1843. When that halcyon day comes I may thank you in person for the remittance that I feel assured is upon the wing. Till then I am your devoted admirer and untiring fellow workman in the cause of our native land,

“JOHN WESTROPP.”

Four days elapsed, during which I vainly expected a reply to this and some other despairing communications. At

last, just as I was beginning to feel all hope extinguished, I was handed a very dirty letter, directed, "Mr. J. Westrope Fore Corts Marshal See Dublin." The sheet of letter paper on which it was written was not enclosed in an envelope — that useful modern invention not having, perhaps, penetrated as far as Ballinasloe—and it was so folded that any curious postman with sufficient leisure could easily have mastered its contents, without breaking the seal, which simply consisted of the impression of a thimble on some sprawling red wax. Its contents were at follows:—

"MY DEAR YOUNG MAN,—I feel for your thrubble and sines on it sends a check for the amount to Mr. Fitzsimmons the times is quare but howld up your hart for I remimber a divilish site wurse in 98 when I was a slip of a gossoun ive heerd of your fame Mr Westrope tho I couldnt make out the french but Ill ax father Mooney its meanin he has been in forrin parts and likely nose I hope soon to be in Dublin and meat you more by token Id have rote sooner but was thryin to make shure twas yourself was in it for betune you and I theres a power of blaggards goin theres won bad member chowshed me out of fifteen pounds lettin on to be young Dan and dun me a durty turn besides in the regard of Dr Ireland if you could only find him out and persikute him accordin to law and give him seven years or so in botany bay Id not mind axin back the money at all what a pity theres nayther stox nor the pilory these times for the like of him pray send a resate God bless you I hope yull be

all rite now Id walk from this to Cork barefut to see the rascal on the thredmil no more at present but remanes

“Yours truly

“PHILIP FOGARTY.”

I have always been accustomed to receive with thankfulness substantial acts of kindness, even when accompanied by bad language, and unchristian and unforgiving as were the sentiments expressed in this phonetic epistle, my gratitude towards the writer was most sincere. It did not prevent me, indeed, from bursting into a hearty fit of laughter at an extraordinary request contained in the letter. I was to be forgiven this debt, but on what condition?—simply that I should “persikute” myself according to law, and get myself transported for a few years! Well, I was transported with joy at all events—and yet my cup of happiness was quickly dashed to the ground, as I reflected on the strong probability of the letter to Malachi having miscarried. Even supposing it reached “Mr. Fitzsimmons” in safety, and that the postman was above temptation, was it not very likely that the cheque had fallen out of a letter so carelessly folded, and got into wrong hands? As this horrid thought took possession of me I became utterly miserable, and the next hour was the most wretched I ever passed in that abode of wretchedness. At last I was relieved by a hurried note from Malachi, saying that all was right, and that I should be free next day, adding, however, that it was well he had not rejected Mr. Fogarty’s important communication—which had reached him unstamped! I

actually jumped and shouted for joy at this intelligence. My first step was to write a letter of fervent thanks to Mr. Fogarty, in which I said I should certainly make a diligent search for the person who had injured him, but suggested that it might be better not to proceed to extremities about a manifest practical joke, which might expose his grey hairs and his respected name to ridicule. I then rushed into the court-yard.

The roaring blades assembled there congratulated me warmly on the prospect of my liberation, but expressed so much regret at having to part with me to-morrow that I determined we should make a night of it. Accordingly I spent a sovereign out of the money my mother had brought me on whisky and tobacco for an evening's jollification. Upwards of a dozen of us did justice to these luxuries. I was voted a prince of good fellows by my new friends, at whose request I gave an animated imitation of O'Connell, beginning with his well-known joke, "Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking," and, *more suo*, closing an impassioned peroration with Moore's verse—

"Where's the slave so lowly,
Condemn'd to chains unholy,
Who, could he burst
His bonds at first,
Would pine beneath them slowly?"

This aspiration for freedom met with the cordial sympathy of my captive guests, albeit they probably put a much more literal construction on it than that intended by the poet.

My autobiographical Muse loves variety; and I shall not

again take advantage of my tyrannous power over the reader by transporting him in imagination into that jovial Bohemia of the insolvents. I may just say in passing that on many subsequent occasions I sojourned there in the body, sometimes as a visitor to embarrassed friends, sometimes by compulsion, and on my own account. For success begets recklessness. From the day Fogarty's letter reached me my faith in my "star" was complete, and I would have esteemed it the rankest heresy to doubt my own invincibility any further. On the whole, though I passed many a sad hour in the Marshalsea afterwards, I look back on it with feelings of fondness and admiration, such as Bruce and Livingstone may be supposed to have entertained for the dismal regions whose secrets they had explored. The corruptible has put on incorruption. Ah! why is it no more permitted to me to revel within those dingy old walls? The Marshalsea has of late years been converted into a barrack, and is occupied, I understand, by—the Militia! Surely, when Ireland becomes a nation, this desecration will be tolerated no longer. Above all public buildings that I know of, the Marshalsea seems peculiarly fitted to be made an Asylum for Decayed Patriots. The necessity for such an institution (already slightly hinted at) is manifest. I hear it constantly said that no profession thrives so well in Ireland as that of patriotism; and there must be truth in the remark;—else why should love of country be as noisy and as demonstrative among us to-day as it was half a century ago? But I want to have the profession placed on a solid

commercial basis. I want to have the heroes in the cause provided for in the future, as well as in the present. I want to see the formation of a great establishment, where worn-out agitators, the veterans of patriotism, may repose on their laurels, and end their days in peace. When that vision is realized, my mission will be accomplished, and I shall feel that I have not lived in vain.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. FOGARTY CONSULTS AN EMINENT MERCHANT AS TO THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS OF BRINGING ME TO JUSTICE.

I RETURNED home a couple of days late for that tender parting scene with Charlotte which would have atoned for so many miserable hours in the past week—a week in which I seemed to have lived for ages. To make matters worse, the darling creature's thumb was seriously injured by being caught in the door of a carriage on her route homeward, and thus she was unfortunately unable even to calm my throbbing bosom with a letter. Her mother wrote rather briefly to mine, described the accident, expressed much thankfulness for the kindness we had shown Charlotte during her visit, and sent her "love to all." This was but "cauld kail" to the panting breast of an impassioned lover. I seized on stationery, and wrote Charlotte a letter in which I vowed eternal adoration, dwelt eloquently on the delicious hours we had passed in the Dargle and elsewhere, compassionated her poor, dear, suffering thumb, wished I was there to kiss it into pristine soundness, etc., etc.

A reply from a young lady with a bruised thumb was

of course not to be looked for ; and my fair readers must imagine for themselves all the loving things Charlotte De Lacy would doubtless have written to me, could she have laid due hold of one of Joseph Gillott's magnum bonum pens. That feat being impossible, I must content myself with narrating my own prosaic transactions.

Though, as we have lately seen, I could devote intense thought and time to some great scheme for raising money or getting out of a scrape, I never could succeed in living within my means, or move in that harness which enables so many dull plodding fellows to climb up the hill of worldly respectability and success. This result of my volatile temperament and untrained habits was most unfortunate. I was almost a year and a half at the bar, and yet, far as my name had spread, and keenly as I had tasted the luxury of popular applause, I had no means of living—no position at my profession—no money—no credit—no character, or worse than none. I was still an Irish gentleman in search of a subsistence. How long was this state of things to last ?

As I strolled dejectedly through Dame Street two days after my liberation, pondering on that important question, I happened to meet the proprietor of the *Firebrand*. He greeted me very cordially, and after some words of course said,—

“By-the-bye, Westropp, I am in want of a smart reporter just now, and you are the very man who will be able to get me one.”

"I am perfectly at your service !"

"And whom do you recommend ?"

"Myself."

"Yourself !—that's rather a good one. You were always fond of your joke."

"But this is no joke—life is no joke—I am a joker no longer. I am confoundedly out at elbows."

"I am very sorry to hear it."

"Had I smothered all my impulses—had I worked like a cart-horse—had I made myself a mere machine, I might—but no matter. What's the screw ?"

"A poor two pounds a week is all I can offer ordinary reporters."

"But I am an extraordinary one. Make it *three*, and I'll throw in an article or two every week that will make people's hair stand on end."

"Done !"

It was certainly most humiliating for the rising hope of Ireland to subside into his old post, that of a mere newspaper reporter. It was as if some warrior, the renown of whose deeds had rung through Europe, found that his day was past, and was driven to earn his bread by writing the history of other heroes. Anything, however, was better than the shiftless life of a mere adventurer. I was fortunately free, as I have stated, from foolish prejudices on the score of pride, and I now cheerfully devoted my energies to a class of business with which old practice on an opposition paper had made me so familiar. But to live within my means

—to discuss wild fowl and champagne in the company of jovial fellows, whose favourite theme was praise of my eloquence and my patriotism, on a wretched three pounds a week!—that was another matter altogether. I was the right man in the wrong place. My social and hospitable nature could never stoop to the paltry economy necessary for a poor man; and therefore it was only a matter of course that I found my debts fast accumulating again. Malachi Fitzsimon had to fight hard battles to preserve my liberty, and told me more than once that his patience was worn out; and I became terribly perplexed for want of a few pounds of ready money.

The sittings after term had not yet concluded, when towards the close of an interesting trial I strolled into court, equipped in my professional wig and gown, and wildly hoping that some attorney would be insane enough to retain me in a case of importance. No such phenomenon, it is true, occurred;—but a very extraordinary interruption of the judicial proceedings led to results so singular that I find it necessary to describe it here.

The learned judge had just begun his charge, and said—“Gentlemen of the jury, in this case the plaintiff seeks to recover a sum of—” when a stentorian voice in the gallery called out, as if in a soliloquy, “A hundred and fifteen pounds—sorrow penny less.” A roar of laughter resounded through the court. The judge sternly demanded the police to eject the offending party; and public curiosity was strongly excited as to whether the delinquent was a ven-

triloquist or a lunatic. *I* happened to know that he was neither; and a cold shudder ran through my frame as a too familiar voice, regardless of all consequences, continued—"That's him, begorra! The spalpeen! The thief of the world! Be the—." At this juncture the exertions of the police proved effectual, and Mr. Philip Fogarty, more fortunate than he was aware in not being committed for contempt of court, was summarily ejected with no slight degree of roughness.

To me this apparently trifling incident was, I need scarcely say, formidable enough. It would be highly inconvenient for the angry Fogarty to lie in wait in the hall, till he could tax me before my laughing brother barristers with the two pecuniary transactions between us. Of course they could both be easily explained. As for the latter, why might not a gentleman in difficulties write frankly for aid to a rich fellow patriot, although a stranger?—and had not Mr. Fogarty's absurd mistake about the former been already corrected by a decision in a police court? True; but somehow or other the concurrence of the two just then would be—awkward, at all events.

No longer feeling any interest in the case before the court, my sole attention was now directed to the best mode of escaping unobserved. At last I resolved on a bold, though somewhat perilous course. My skill in personation and the success with which I had lately enacted the character of a Quaker, had induced me to utilize so very simple a disguise in case of emergency, and consequently I had

established a broad-brimmed hat and a pair of green spectacles at home, as well as in the Avernus of the courts, wherein lawyers stow their canonicals. On the present occasion I dived rapidly and cautiously downstairs, doffed my wig and gown for equipment so becoming a "friend," turned up the collars of my coat and waistcoat, clipped my whiskers a little, applied to my cheeks a powder which effectually robbed me of my brilliant natural complexion, and strode solemnly through the hall with my hands folded on my breast. I saw the wrathful Fogarty standing at one of the doors, armed with a hockey stick, and evidently bent on vengeance. It was a situation in which an inferior artist would have taken no notice of him, and simply passed on, but I immediately formed a new plan of campaign, the execution of which demanded all the coolness, presence of mind, and inventive power, that I could summon to my aid.

Boldly taking the initiative, I snuffled forth in tones most unlike those which had identified me as the youthful hope of the Liberator—"A fine day, friend."

"Middlin'," he growled.

"Thou seemest a stranger here. Can I assist thee in aught?"

"Maybe you could insense me when Counsellor Westropp will be out."

"Verily he hath departed by a back way."

"Divil sweep him!"

Turning a deaf ear to this pious ejaculation, I continued—"I suppose thou hast retained him?"

"Retain him ! I wish to J——s (Lord forgive me for swearin' !) I could retain him for seven years."

"Truly, friend, if thou hast so protracted a suit, I would advise thee to retain some more skilful lawyer—such a man, for instance, as Gerald Fitzgibbon, or James Whiteside, or Abraham—"

"Ah, but it's not that I mane. I'd like to keep him seven years goin' on a threadmill, the divil's imp ! Isn't that plain talkin' ? "

"Plain enough, and indicating, I fear, a revengeful spirit, which is even as a snare. And has this misguided youth injured thee in aught ? "

"Has he ! Be the hole of me coat, he has robbed me out of a face. Oh, wait till I tell you !—see here, Mither—"

"Pim—Ebenezer Pim."

"What ! Is it one of the great Pims of George's Street ? "

"Yea, verily, an unworthy junior member of that firm, which hath highly prospered in commercial affairs."

"Be all the hairs in an ass's tail, and that's not a smooth oath, I'm proud to meet you, Mither Pim. Give us the fist. Will you do me the favour of crackin' a bottle of wine with me ? "

"I have scruples in matters of that sort, unless it be taken medicinally. It is what I seldom do."

"Ay but you'll do it now, alanna, till I tell you all about this limb of the ould boy. Come along to Peter O'Donohoe's."

After some further show of reluctance I consented, and we got side by side on a car. Mr. Fogarty—whose tendency to embellish his discourse with profane expletives I had several times to check somewhat sternly, though unfortunately without effect—entertained me with an animated account of my own enormities. I had first done him out of fifteen pounds by “playactin’ young Dan,” next sent him on a wild goose chase to Dr. Ireland’s house, which had very nearly led to his committal as a dangerous lunatic, and lastly, I had the unparalleled impudence to “rise” a hundred pounds from him, by a letter in my real name. Glory be to God, he had now seen the varmint in his wig and gown, and could never be mistaken about him again, bad scran to him !

“I never met such a crooked rapsallion in all my born days,” he proceeded. “I only wish I could spend half a day and a ha’penny on him.”

“Indeed !” I exclaimed, wondering at this liberality of spirit. “And why so ?”

“Half a day to see him hanged, and a ha’penny to buy his last speech and dyin’ declaration !”

However horrified at this cold-blooded announcement, it was with some difficulty I refrained from laughing at it.

“But,” said I, “if I follow thee aright in this strange tale, it perplexes me to know how thou wert able to identify this man Westropp in the court.”

“Faix, aisy enough. He’s as well known as the parish pump. ‘Look at Counsellor Westhropp, the great spaker,’

says a fellow beside me in the gallery. 'Where?' says I; 'he's the very man I'd like to meet.' 'Down yondher,' says he, 'just in the corner sate, behind that dark-looking man with the big bag.' 'Tare-an-owns,' says I, 'it's my bowld young Dan, no less. It was time for me to cotch him.' They stared as if I was mad, and when I said somethin' about how he thrated me, the ould woman of a judge beyant had me turned out with no more politeness, nor remorse of conscience, nor if I was a pig. And this is what they call a land of liberty—bad cess to it!"

Arrived at O'Donohoe's tavern in Abbey Street, we proceeded to despatch a bottle of sherry, my companion dividing his eloquence between threats of summary vengeance against Counsellor Westropp, oaths sworn before me in an unofficial capacity, and which I accordingly suppress, and acknowledgments of the honour done him by one of "the great Pims" in sharing his wine and his confidence.

"But see here, friend Fogarty," I observed, "let us not be rash. Thou talkest of taking legal proceedings against this erring youth;—now, the law is well known to be slow and doubtful. When dost thou purpose returning to Galway?"

"I'm afeard I must go early to-morrow."

"And how about this evening?"

"I have still a power of places to call on—the weary's on them for cattle! It's what I ought to be in Smithfield this blessed minute."

I ruminated a little, and then said thoughtfully,—

“It is hard to advise in a perplexing case like this—very hard; but if thou hast a wise and steady friend in Dublin, with whom thou wouldst leave a small sum, say from twenty to thirty pounds, to fee an attorney and retain counsel in thy absence, much might be promptly done towards prosecuting this misguided youth. I think I see my way in the matter (albeit we Friends are not men of law).”

“All I want is fairity—sorrow hair I care what it costs. And might I make bowld to ax you, Mr. Pim honey, to see afther it?—I know it’s takin’ a great liberty.”

“Nay, it’s not that; but I hardly feel free in conscience to look after secular things, beyond the business of the firm. Unless, indeed, it would greatly convenience thee.”

“Oh, look at the way he thrated me!”

“I can quite believe it, friend; for, strange to say, it was business matters between myself and this Westropp that led to his imprisonment in the Marshalsea.”

“Ah, then, was it? And I let him out like a great gommock. Isn’t it a murther Saint Patrick isn’t in it, to dhrive the like of such slippery snakes into the say?”

“Nay, my brother, that is scarcely a Christian sentiment, and may be the source of backsliding. But let us get to business. I will record this affair of thine in due form.” And I took out my pencil and pocket-book with great solemnity.

“Be this and be that you’re a jewel, and I’ll never say black was the white of a Quaker’s eye again. D’ye think twenty pounds will be enough to set things goin’?”

"Twenty-five will be safer, considering the importance of the case—that is, twenty-five *guineas*. These carnal-minded men of law always count by guineas. If their claims be less, I can return thee the difference;"—and I made a formal entry of the transaction in my pocket-book, as I consigned the stipulated amount to my purse.

"I feel my mind aisier now, Mr. Pim. I'll go bail we'll have him at last."

"I am convinced, friend Fogarty, we have him as safe as if he were here this moment. I will write thee word of my doings from time to time, and never forget, when thou comest to Dublin again, to visit me at my residence, Proteus Hall, Dalkey."

I have at various periods of my existence recruited the exhausted exchequer by levying taxation under extraordinary circumstances, but "never aught like this." Here I was actually paid twenty-five guineas to retain counsel—in order to prosecute myself!

"Were ever guineas in such humour won?" I fear my transactions with Mr. Fogarty will suggest recollections of Bampfylde Moore Carew, of dubious fame; but to what were they all owing? To what, but the terrible necessity of living? The Fates kept constantly dangling that forbidden fruit the O'Fogarty before me, when I was most in need of such nourishment as he could yield. Was I to starve, with the land of plenty full in view? It is a nice question; but I cannot stop to moralise. Mr. Fogarty has long since been gathered to his fathers. Touching ac-

counts of his funeral, the largest ever known in Ballinasloe, have reached me. He was bewailed, it appears, not in tears only, but in drink also; and so vast was the amount of whisky consumed at his wake, that it led to much diversion of an intensely exciting nature, including several broken heads, and the loss of not more than three or four lives. In his case I cheerfully echo the pious aspiration *Requiescat in pace*; for who would wish such a troubled spirit to walk again? He did not remember me in his will, not leaving out of his immense wealth as much as the price of a suit of mourning to the fellow patriot who has striven so hard to preserve his memory. Nay, I understand he cherished sentiments of malignity towards me to the last; but I wish to live in charity with all men, and I cheerfully forgive him.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW TO PROCURE BALLAST.

I WAS too conscientious to neglect my promise of corresponding with Mr. Fogarty, and two days afterwards I apprised him, in a very business-like letter, written in a stiff, formal hand, that I had explained his case to Mr. C. Fitzgerald, solicitor, who had laid it before two eminent counsel. They were both of opinion that recent legislation had transferred the offence of raising the wind from a criminal to a civil jurisdiction,—and as the long vacation was about to commence, no action could be brought till November, till which time I hoped he would try to preserve his soul in peace.

As I do not know whether there was really any Ebenezer Pim connected with the firm, I am unable to say whether Mr. Fogarty's reply was opened at the large house in George's Street, or sent to the dead letter office; and I regret that one of the curiosities of literature should accordingly be lost to the world. I presume that when Fogarty found that even one of "the great Pims" waxed careless about his affairs, and declined to correspond with him further, he gave me up as a hopeless job. At all events I heard nothing more about him.

I practised such unusual economy with the twenty-five guineas thus strangely acquired that, though I paid some small pressing house bills, and had three glorious nights with boon companions besides, the money actually lasted me ten days. I did something, too, to eke out my small salary as a reporter, receiving three guineas a month for grinding in classics a wealthy and idle youth who purposed entering Trinity College in the following October. If I undertook to teach this pupil much that I did not know myself, I made amends by instructing him in many things that were not included in the bargain at all. Thus, after a little playful trifling over Homer and Horace, with more curious and novel renderings of abstruse passages than either Bentley or Dacier could supply, we would gradually diverge into anecdote, song, a game of backgammon, or a glass of punch ; by which means the spirits were cheered as well as the mind enlightened. On the whole, I found bear-leading—or perhaps I should say, donkey-driving—an agreeable occupation, and I am bound to say my guineas were easily earned ;—but, alas ! they were very easily spent, too.

While matters were in this condition, and I was struggling to keep my head above water, I was walking one day past the Caucasus Hotel in Stephen's Green, when a window of that building was thrown open, and I heard my name called by the voice of an old friend, whom I immediately joined, and whom it is necessary for me to introduce in due form to the reader.

The Hon. Reginald Edmondsbury Austin, only son of Lord

Lofthouse, was member for a western Irish county by the good grace of Mr. O'Connell. In character and condition Austin and I resembled each other not a little. We were both in a chronic state of bankruptcy. We both had a keen relish for the good things of life, and necessity had frequently spurred us both to singular feats of strategy. He had not, indeed, my special gifts, either of speech or invention, but we had much in common, alike in our defects and our virtues—of which latter, it is true, modesty has prevented me from giving many proofs in my own case, but to which an autobiographer may gracefully do justice in that of his friend. In person Austin was a well-built man of about thirty, with patrician features, clear gray eyes, aquiline nose, and a mouth indicative at once of latent humour and a keen relish for the good things of life. I knew by experience that he cherished a sincere friendship for me, and there was no man living whom I could more profitably consult in any emergency.

"Hallo! old fellow," I cried, "I'm delighted to see you. I had no idea you were in town."

"I am here nearly a week, but up to my eyes in business—business of the greatest importance to myself. But before I say a word about it, you must tell me how things are going with you."

"Badly enough, in all conscience. I never knew patriotism at such a discount. A man does not clear his expenses now by serving his country."

"Ah yes," said he. "The game is up."

"The worst of it is," said I, "the capitalists have grown

confoundedly suspicious. We have certainly fallen upon an unbelieving generation. Dick Ferguson won't touch me with a pair of tongs ; and as for Tom—But where's the use of talking of my woes ? ”

“ Not the slightest. Well, Jack, you have often stood to me when I was in low water, and I have a little medicine here that I think will be good for your complaint ; ”—saying which he produced a well-filled purse, and immediately handed me twenty pounds.

“ Now that I have retained counsel, I must state the case,” said he, turning a deaf ear to my thanks. “ The fact is, I am going to be a rich man at last—by marriage ;—and I'm afraid I can hardly ask you to congratulate me.”

“ You are very mysterious. Married ?—And not ask me to congratulate you ?—and to a rich woman ? ”

“ To ‘ The Caucasus ’ herself ! ”

“ The what ? ”

“ That's what she is sometimes called. I mean Miss Jane Broadhurst, sole proprietor of this great hotel, ‘ The Caucasus.’ ”

I started, and, to tell the truth, did *not* feel inclined to congratulate him. I had heard of this Miss Broadhurst as a very ignorant, vulgar, good-natured woman, enormously rich and enormously fat.

“ Oh ! ”—and I coughed dubiously.

“ You have heard of Miss Broadhurst, I suppose ? ”

“ Well, yes, slightly ; the merest rumours. Tendency to *embonpoint*, I believe ? ”

"I see you want to spare my feelings," said he, laughing, "but you may use plain English, for I'll soon have to grow callous about it. Yes—it might certainly tire a tortoise to go round her ;—but what of that ? She has a heart of gold—and mountains of gold in other ways, too. Why, man, she owns houses in several of our leading streets and squares."

"And it is to this lady you will be saying, one of these days, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow' ?"

"Yes—by goods of course meaning debts. But see here, Jack—she fixes four thousand a year on me by a marriage settlement, and that's not a bad placebo for a few slight weaknesses in grammar, my boy."

"Well, to tell the honest truth, Austin, if you had called me in to consult me about venturing on such a marriage, I should not have recommended it ; but I suppose it's too late to recede now."

"Certainly."

I looked very grave, and I felt that there was something bitter even in the assumed mirthfulness with which Austin seemed to treat this all-important subject. When the great jokes of life are brought home to us, they are often found to be serious matters enough. The constant presence and society of a woman like my mother, absurd though I might consider her notions, had unconsciously made me much more fastidious than I was aware of. To spoil an Egyptian like Philip Fogarty, of course, was one thing ; to marry a vulgar hotel-keeper, weighing thirty stone, was something very different. As an abstract question, I had always con-

sidered a rich marriage as the highest object of a needy gentleman's ambition, recognizing with Sir Antony Absolute that "if you get the estate, you must take it, with the live stock on it, as it stands." But now I had secretly to admit that even a wife of boundless wealth, good temper and character, and devoted affection, may be bought too dear.

"Does Lord Lofthouse know his future daughter-in-law?" I asked after a pause.

"Oh no. He is living in the south of France, you know, and in shaky health. He complains that I have drained him to the uttermost, and refused point-blank to honour my last application, so you see I am literally driven to take this step. And I must tell you, Miss Broadhurst's kindness knows no bounds. She has got me out of many a scrape before. I have a couple of hundred pounds about me this moment, all drawn from the one source."

"Very generous, indeed. And when does the marriage take place?"

"Next Tuesday."

While I was plunged in reflection on these singular tidings, and feeling that Austin mentioned these proofs of Miss Broadhurst's liberality quite as much to reconcile himself to the great step he was taking as to satisfy me, I heard a tap at the door, which was the prelude to the entrance of the very fattest female whom I have ever had the pleasure of seeing. Swathed in light-coloured silk, puffed out to the absurd extent wherewith the perverse ingenuity of the sex

so often delights in violating symmetry for the sake of effect, she might fairly boast that her latitude equalled her longitude. My first glimpse of this terrestrial globe reminded me of a visit I had paid to Donnybrook Fair in my boyhood, when for the small charge of a penny I had been permitted to see "the largest and loveliest lady in the world" exhibiting in a booth.

My critical taste admitted that, had Miss Broadhurst's head been fixed upon another neck and shoulders, she might have fairly passed for a handsome woman. How often do we hear women praised as "handsome," who have not a spark of expression! Miss Broadhurst was certainly as devoid of expression as need be. She had large and fine though sleepy eyes, a well-shaped nose, glossy brown hair, smooth cheeks, and a good complexion. So far all was well enough; but it was in the lower part of her face that the animal broke out unmistakably. Her mouth was wide, and her lips thick, while double chins of great volume melted into a neck so short as to suggest serious apprehensions of her "going off" suddenly.

"Miss Broadhurst—my old friend, Mr. Westropp."

I made a profound bow, and the mountain tottered to its base in return.

"I am delighted to meet you, sir. Isn't it your name as I see so often in the papers, speechifyin', and that?"

"Very likely."

"That's so nice. I'm proud to know a party like you, Mr. Westropp."

I shuddered to think what would be the consequences of an introduction of the future Lady Lofthouse to my mother. Meanwhile the tragi-comic expression of Austin's face was indescribable, and I could imagine him writhing under his forced smile.

"You flatter me, Miss Broadhurst," I replied. "I have certainly worked as hard as I could for my country—and suffered for her, too ; but let that pass. I believe I have to congratulate you on an approaching interesting event," I added in my most dulcet tones.

"Oh, you gents are such quizzes," she simpered, with the artless smile of an overfed baby. "And so dear Redgy told you he is going to make me an honourable lady? Won't it be grand to belong to the aristocracy? For my part, Mr. Westropp, I'd rather have blood than anything!"

"Yes," said I, somewhat puzzled by this sanguinary remark. "After all, Miss Broadhurst, there's nothing like the real thing."

"Quite so, sir—the real thing, as you say. It will be a great change both for him and me. The poor dear fellow" (smiling lovingly on him, and gently stroking him on the back) "was so lonesome for want of a companion ;"—and she might have added that he had selected—though in a very different sense from that applied to Dr. Johnson—"a tremendous companion."

"Yes," said I, still puzzled, and afraid of committing myself in some way, "there's nothing like matrimony. We men, you know, are so sadly in want of ballast."

The phrase certainly was not a felicitous one, considering the extensive dimensions of "The Caucasus," and it had scarcely passed my lips when I anxiously wished it recalled ; but fortunately it was taken in the best possible part. She continued—

"You are too good, Mr. Westropp ; thanks very much for the compliment."

"Don't mention it, I beg."

"I am just going out for a carriage airing, and to make a few purchases. But I hope you'll kindly weave ceremony, and pick a bit with Redgy and I at six o'clock, Only ourselves teetateet."

"I shall be most happy." And, favouring me with a sweet smile, and a cordial shake of the hand, she vanished.

"Well, Jack, what do you think of her ?"

"I like her very much—very much, indeed. But why, oh ! why are you going to marry her ?"

Alas ! the answer was the one which I myself have so often to give for my manifold shortcomings—*a man must live.*

I hurried through some business about town, and punctually at six o'clock entered Miss Broadhurst's magnificent dining-room. That lady's sense of good breeding made her apologize profusely for inviting me to such "plain fare" ; but as we had a banquet of seven courses, including all the delicacies of the season, I felt that no apologies were necessary on this score. She frequently

complimented me on my powers of clever "spouting," by which image she designed a reference to my oratorical abilities, and she was shocked to hear that an ungrateful country had not done more for me, whereupon Austin slyly suggested that the courses I was following would yet probably raise me to an elevated position. Miss Broadhurst had "the pleasure of wine" with both of us, and during dessert she had the pleasure of brandy too, more than once. At last she upheaved her vastness, and transferred herself to a sofa, earnestly begging meanwhile that I should consider this as Liberty Hall, and should make myself perfectly at home. During the next five minutes her "smile was childlike and bland," as of one entertaining optimistic views on things in general, but it was evident that all attempts to maintain any coherent conversation were embarrassing to her overtaxed energies. Then the very semblance of an attempt soon ceased, and a certain deep breathing—call it not a snore—intimated that sleep had overtaken this oleaginous mass of adipose humanity.

"How long is this likely to last?" I asked Austin.

"About a couple of hours. She is an early riser, and gets tired after dinner."

"Then let us have a stroll."

We lighted our cigars, and plunged forthwith into the interior recesses of Stephen's Green, then a dingy, close borough, sacred for the most part to nursery maids and their infant charges.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCERNING "THE NOOSE," AND OTHER GRAVE MATTERS.

DURING our stroll in the Green, Austin lamented the depressed state of my affairs, and suggested that there was no course open to me but to follow the excellent example he had set me, and marry "well."

"I know a lively widow in Leeson Street," said he, "with a hundred thousand pounds, who would jump at a lively young fellow like you. She is not much above sixty, and with the exception of a slight lameness, I am not aware of any blemish in her."

"I am very much obliged to you," said I, "and the prospect is certainly tempting, but unfortunately I am an engaged man already."

"Engaged?—nonsense! To an heiress, I hope?"

"To a charming girl, without a penny."

"Why, this is midsummer madness. I thought to do you a service, but I see you are determined to cut your own throat."

"And yet," I continued musingly, and feeling strangely

agitated, "I don't exactly know whether I am an engaged man or not. In the first place, my lovely girl has seriously injured her thumb."

"Pshaw! Do you think you could wriggle out of a promise to marry because the lady's thumb was sprained?"

"Certainly not; nothing could be more ridiculous. But I was going to say, she lives in Miltown Malbay, and she has not yet been able—even if she was willing—to answer any of my love-letters."

"Phfew!"—He indulged in a low whistle, bent his brows, and, evidently interested, begged me to give him the particulars of this singular case, which I accordingly did without the slightest reservation.

"I see how it is," said he, snapping his fingers. "She cares about *that* much for you."

My *amour propre* was deeply wounded at this suggestion. "Think," I said, "of our last day together—of her melting tones—of her languishing glances of her heavenly—"

"All of which she would have equally ready to ensnare any other dupe. No, no;—nothing can be clearer. She thought she was catching a rising man, and quickly found her mistake. If she was spooney like you, she'd have gone to see you in the Marshalsea, if it was hell's gate. You say yourself you have no proof that her thumb is so bad; and if it is, what is to prevent her sending special messages of love by her mother?"

"Oh, girls don't like to do that."

"Nonsense! Why, many a girl in the same situation would write to you with her left hand. Nay, there is a clever lady exhibiting now, who manages to write with her toes."

"That is all very well, and to tell the truth, I have thought as much myself; but even if she does not care a pin about me, the family will be sure to bring an action if I ever marry an heiress."

"No fear of that. As a lady, she will naturally shrink from publicity, and of course you must be prepared to stump down pretty handsomely for a compromise. But I suppose you are not afraid to face a jury, if it should come to that?"

"I would much rather not. You see, I have written her sheets of the most outrageous twaddle. My last letter ended, 'Ever, Charley Darley, your own own Jacksy Wacksy.' Now, imagine what the Tory papers would give to get hold of that!"

"I certainly think, whatever your oratory may be worth, you'll scarcely shine as a poet,—judging by the specimen. Well, it's a comfort at all events that 'the looker-on sees more of the game than he that plays.' Let us see what's to be done."

He remained silent for a couple of minutes,

"His cogitative faculties immersed
In cogibundity of cogitation,"—

and then said—

"Jack, it will never do to let this girl play fast and loose

with you. You must not lose a moment in ascertaining if she still considers her engagement binding. Write to her mother to-night, and demand an immediate answer."

He was manifestly right. Visions of love and ecstasy were all very well, but then the reciprocity must not be all on the one side. He took out his pocket-book, and slowly dictated a very cautious letter for me to write to Mrs. De Lacy, referring to my engagement with her daughter, and my late impressed communications to her, wondering that I had never received any answer to them, asking if Charlotte still considered that engagement sacred, and candidly regretting that my poverty was such that it must be years before I could think of offering her a home.

On returning to Baggot Street that night, after partaking of a gorgeous supper with Miss Broadhurst and her "Redgy," I wrote the momentous letter, with a few slight alterations, and committed it with a beating heart to the post. Reason told me that the course I was adopting must sound the death-knell of my frantic passion. Under the influence of a strange glamour I had cherished for Charlotte De Lacy a love amounting to infatuation, and I had thought that love must be returned—simply because she had said it was. Now, it was my stern task to tear myself loose from bonds that I should never have suffered to enthrall me. Of course it was all for the best; and yet, with the usual contrariety of all things human, the image of Charlotte rose, as if reproachingly, before my mind's eye pallid,

spiritual, more lovely and more loving than ever ;—and as fancy recalled the delicious hours we had spent together, I felt myself well-nigh driven to desperation. But Austin had opened my eyes. There must be no more yielding to weakness. I had myself, and my mother and sister, to look to. It was perfectly manifest that Charlotte did not care for me. Yes, I could see that now ; but how if she were to simulate a passion that she did not feel ? Was not a woman who had acted as she had done capable of such deceit ? Horrible thought ! How if, secretly laughing at me all the while, she were to bind me to the life-long engagement, from which I had left myself no loop-hole of escape ? These and other equally distracting considerations kept crowding on my brain, and almost completely robbed me of sleep.

There are times when some odd expression, or the air of some song, will keep continually ringing in our ears, and returning to us hour after hour, despite all our exertions to get rid of it ;—and such a strangely haunting effect had the expressive word “noose” on me that night. “The noose !” I could not shake it off. If my thoughts turned on the news of the day, I found that “news” and “noose” sounded just alike ;—if I devised some ingenious *ruse* for obtaining a loan from the Jews, I unconsciously invoked the Muse, and Jews and Muse and *ruse* all rhymed to “noose ;”—if I imagined myself listening to O’Connell, while in his place in Parliament he inveighed against some oppressive bill, just as I fancied I heard the victorious shouts of our party, “the noes have it,” the noes melted imperceptibly into

the "noose"—the noose, perhaps, would have me! No, no, sleep was out of the question.

During the whole of the next day, Friday, I did not see my worthy friend Austin. He had arranged to call on me early on Saturday, to learn if I had any news from Miltown Malbay, and had cautioned me against informing the ladies of my family of his strange matrimonial engagement, until he should be actually buckled to Behemoth.

On Saturday morning the terrible double knock of the postman made me totter, sickly and shivering, to the door. He handed me a letter from Mrs. De Lacy, which I opened with a trembling hand. A hurried glance at its contents reassured me, and I heaved a deep sigh of relief, as I found that I was politely "declined with thanks." The vague and remote prospect of starvation in a cottage had evidently no attraction for Charlotte or her relatives. Could I wonder at it? However justly vexed at her long silence, could I blame her for her final and definite refusal, seeing that I had appeared a highly prosperous man during our courtship? And yet I did blame her severely, even while exulting in my recovered freedom. I pronounced her a heartless jilt, who was ready enough to

"sail with me

On the smooth surface of a summer sea,
But would desert the ship, and seek the shore,
When the winds whistle and the tempests roar."

As for my warm-hearted sister Kate, there were no bounds to her indignation, though of course both she and my mother heartily congratulated me on my escape. With the

charitable feelings usually displayed by ladies in judging the conduct of their own sex, they imputed Charlotte's protracted silence to her watching to see whether my prospects as a public man should appear likely to revive. The reader may have an opportunity later on of forming a more accurate estimate of her motives.

While we were deep in discussion on this matter a cab drove up to our door, and I retired to my own room to receive Austin, towards whom my sentiments of gratitude for rescuing me from such a false position were unbounded. I was surprised and pained to find him ghastly pale, and evidently in a state of the greatest anguish. He flung himself on a chair, and gasping out "All is over!" buried his head in his hands.

"What is the matter? What has gone wrong?" I inquired, much alarmed. "Miss Broadhurst is not ill, I hope?"

"She was found dead in her bed this morning," he faintly ejaculated.

Though by no means surprised—my observation having made me consider such an event probable enough at any moment—I was filled with horror at the sudden death of one who had so lately treated me with cordial hospitality, and I expressed my warmest sympathy with Austin in his disappointment. Of course when rich people die there is always much curiosity felt as to the disposal of their properties, and I took the earliest decent opportunity of expressing a hope that Miss Broadhurst had remembered him substantially in her will.

"Unfortunately she has made none," said he, becoming more collected; "if she had, I know she would have left me everything;—she told me so herself. But indolence had been creeping on her very much of late, and she kept putting it off from day to day, and said it would do very well after our marriage."

"My poor fellow!—And are you no way benefited by her death?"

"Not the slightest. Those wretched settlements, that were to have made me a rich man, are all a mockery, and I have not a claim to a penny of her money."

This was not a very brilliant wind-up to a fortune-hunting speculation that had promised such great results. Poor Jane Broadhurst was to be interred on the following Tuesday—the very day that had been fixed on for her marriage—and immediately after the sad ceremony Austin was to start for Cannes to see, and endeavour to become reconciled with, his father, who appeared from bulletins in the daily papers to be fast sinking. He expressed much satisfaction on hearing from me that the course he had suggested in my own case had so promptly proved effectual, and that I was "off" with Miss De Lacy. Before he left my house I took the opportunity of introducing him to my mother and Kate, with whom he had a few minutes' conversation, but he was so agitated—owing, as they naturally thought, solely to anxiety about his father's position—that he could do but scant justice to his conversational powers.

When I was alone, and reflected calmly on the situation, I saw clearly how deeply I was indebted to apparent misfortune. Those two bailiffs, who had transported me to the enchanted castle at Thomas Street, had proved benefactors in disguise, and a temporary change of air and scene, which had made me so miserable for a while, had rescued me from the life-long thralldom of "the noose." Deeply, too, as I sympathized with my friend Austin in his sorrow, and much as I admired the really genuine affection he had felt for his female-Falstaffian *fiancée*, I could not but own that he also had had a most fortunate escape. He had to face poverty, it is true, but at what a price would he have purchased wealth! "It is delightful," says the Roman satirist, "to be pointed at with the finger, and to hear it said, 'That is he!'" Perhaps so;—but how if the index should add, "And that is she, too!" Surely a woman who is large enough for two ought in all conscience to remain single; but however that might be, Jane Broadhurst, despite her kindness and her amiability, had neither the manners nor the education befitting the wife of a man of rank, or, as she herself had expressed it, "an honourable lady." Now, Austin and I were both free—I from a lovely, heartless, penniless siren—he from an absurd, ignorant, devotedly attached millionaire, who had broken the records of obesity. The world of beauty, and perhaps of heiresses, was before us; and "there was as good fish in the sea as ever was caught," even though the fish should not prove, in Hamlet's words, "very like a whale."

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH I AM PRESENTED WITH A WHITE ELEPHANT.

NOTHING further worth commemorating happened to me till one morning in September, when to my great surprise I was honoured by a visit from Daniel O'Connell. I warmly greeted my illustrious chief, who had been just restored to liberty by a successful appeal to the House of Lords. Wondering very much what could have made him for the first time cross my threshold, I said—

“Oh, dear sir, it is so good of you to call on me! And so they have really let you out at last?”

“Yes, my boy, and small thanks to them. The law was too strong for my enemies, and Lord Denman had to confess that such a trial by jury as mine was ‘a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.’ You are almost the first man I have called on since I achieved my emancipation.”

“And I esteem it the highest of honours,” said I, still wondering what was coming. “I feel like the French soldiers in hospital, when Napoleon visited them to give them their medicines with his own hand.” I was perfectly sincere in this statement, and I am convinced, indeed, that,

not excepting Napoleon himself, there never was a man who elicited feelings of more enthusiastic devotion among his followers than O'Connell.

"Thanks, my dear boy. Oh, we shall fight them yet. We shall yet make Ireland a nation!—But I want to talk to you on business. I have called to know will you give me the benefit of your eloquence in Parliament?"

I started. "Will I pay the national debt, had not you better ask? I fear it will be as easy for me to do the one thing as the other."

"There it is—youth is always so foolish. Don't you know I have the representation of most of Ireland in my pocket still?"

"I know that well, sir, and you will have it all your lifetime; but a newspaper reporter—"

"Oh, of course you must give that up."

"And without a penny."

"There are pence, and pounds too, still to be had in Ireland, by working for them. And if you have no money, you know, so much the more reason that you should be made free from arrest for debt." Here he winked his wonderful wink, and leered that indescribable leer which would be worth three thousand a year to any comic actor who could faithfully reproduce it.

"I am delighted to find," said I, "that imprisonment and sorrow have not banished your old fun. Yes, we can't wonder at members of Parliament advancing their own interests, like other people. As a Parliament of lawyers,

they make the law unintelligible to the people, though every one is 'supposed,' under heavy penalties, to know it ;—as a Parliament of landholders they give the claims of house and land precedence of all others ;—and as many of them are hopelessly insolvent, they secure the whole body from arrest for debt. It is all highly natural."

"Bravo, Westropp !—there is the right ring in these sentences. I knew you would improve ; I always said it. Just take my advice, and never mix your metaphors—at least out of Tipperary and Connemara ; and if you drop them altogether in Parliament, so much the better. The English are a dull race, and don't understand our high flights."

"And you yourself, sir," I ventured to observe, with some diffidence, for I knew it was not always safe to gambol with the lion, "have not you resorted largely to metaphor ?"

"Oh, yes—occasionally ; but I always knew what I was about. Try and know always what *you* are about. It is of the first importance."

"I shall endeavour, at all events. And now pray tell me what constituency is to be honoured by having me for its representative ?"

"Gulgreina—population three thousand—voters a hundred and sixty. I'll take care of the qualification question. The nomination is fixed for next week. You have only to go down there *pro formâ*, and be returned. Oh, it will be a thousand pities if they ever disfranchise Gulgreina !—Tom

Steele¹ will be in waiting to introduce you to the priests, and have the tar-barrels lighted. You compared me just now to Napoleon,—and Tom must do to represent the Old Guard.” And again he winked the wonderful wink, and leered the indescribable leer.

The great agitator pressed my hand, and departed. On recalling that interview, I have often felt saddened to think that he died in less than three years, after having lived to see his beloved land devastated by one of the most tremendous calamities on record. During the dialogue I have described, there was not the slightest trace of any dark foreboding about him. He was fresh, buoyant, hopeful, vigorous as ever. He had only remained some five minutes with me, and yet in that brief time how thoroughly business-like he had been—what words of sage counsel he had spoken—what gleams of his old exuberant humour had shone forth! That his glowing hope of making “Ireland a nation” communicated itself to me I will not exactly say. There are points on which your Boswells are often wiser than their Johnsons. The prospect, however, which he had held out to a man in my obscure position certainly justified me in cherishing some dazzling day-dreams. To become a member of Parliament in my twenty-seventh year was in

¹ This was a tall, eccentric, but highly respected Protestant gentleman of good family and education, who loved O’Connell with enthusiastic devotion, constantly waited upon him, and had made great sacrifices in his cause. He always wore a sort of military undress, and presented a very striking appearance.

the highest degree gratifying both to my ambition and my vanity. Commonplace, hardworking members of my own profession, who had sneered at or pitied me for not moving in their harness, might now regard me with respect, nay envy; Charlotte De Lacy might repent that she had jilted a man with such a career before him; and—last, not least—I might snap my fingers at all the bailiffs in creation. Cool reflection, of course, whispered that my elevated social position must prove a source of no slight embarrassment, and that Mr. O'Connell's well-meant kindness had presented me with a white elephant. I had enumerated to that great man some of the peculiar advantages which our members of Parliament had conferred on themselves; but, alas! they had omitted the most important of all—they had not awarded themselves any salary! Great numbers, of course, did not need any. I did; and I sympathized strongly with my fellow-countryman, who, in advertising for a situation, mentioned that "work was not so much an object as wages." What was I to live on when I resigned my employments both as a reporter and a tutor? On air? On my wits? On fresh Fogartys? Awful as had been the warning against fortune-hunting which Reginald Austin had received, must I not take his advice, and go in for the lame old widow with a hundred thousand pounds whom he had recommended to me? I had often heard of "the irony of fate." I wonder was she ever so intensely ironical with any one as with Jack Westropp!

Surprises seldom come alone. I had passed a long time

in that dull uniformity which I have always found so depressing to my spirits, when the monotony of my existence was broken by this visit from my great political chief. That very evening I had just returned home after my day's toils, and was plunged in a thousand wild reveries, consequent on the vision of fairyland which had been opened to me, when another visitor was announced. This was my friend Austin, attired in deep mourning, and once more the bearer of fatal tidings. He brought the first news of the melancholy event which, while making him an orphan, conferred on him the title and estates of Lord Lofthouse.

On joining our family circle, he gave us a brief sketch of his recent proceedings. Owing to that great bone of contention, money, there had for some time been a marked coolness between himself and the late peer. Fortunately he had arrived in Cannes, in time not only to receive the paternal blessing and forgiveness, but to be a help and comfort to his father, who lived longer than was expected, though in much pain, and in a very querulous condition. When I told him of the prospects held out to me by Mr. O'Connell, he expressed great surprise, and while warmly congratulating me, said that it rested altogether with myself to turn those prospects to good account. How easy he must have considered it for me to evolve an income out of the depth of my own consciousness!

"We were just going to tea," said my mother. "Will your lordship kindly join us?"

He at once accepted the invitation, and seemed quite at home. A cup of tea in a quiet family group like ours was most welcome, as he said, after his long tossing about among hotels and club-houses, both in London and on the Continent.

I suppose it was my early struggles with the difficulties of a false position that have made me such a realist through life; but I have never been able to understand the lord-worship so prevalent in the British Isles, which has survived even the assaults of a Thackeray. "Your lordship"—"your excellency"—"your grace"—"your royal highness"—what tiresome, unmeaning absurdities are these to address to poor humanity! How stupidly do they fall upon the ear of any man who has learned to think! Women, however—at least, women from the west of Ireland—are never democrats. The gilding on the gingerbread of life is always gold to them; and Kate, assiduously instructed as she had been by her mother in the endless ramifications of a County Clare pedigree, evidently looked with something like veneration on the present representative of nobility. I observe these follies, without commenting on them. I could not, however, suppress a grin as I heard Kate addressing "his lordship" with an air of solemnity very unusual to her. Lofthouse noticed my sardonic expression, and burst out laughing.

"You must excuse me," said he, "but I feel this new title pinching me like a tightly fitting coat. I suppose I shall get used to it, but for mercy's sake spare me to-night."

"And what are we to call you?"

"Anything you like. You are friends, and among friends I am plain Reginald."

"I object to the adjective," remarked Kate, archly, "and would not like you to apply it even to myself."

"There is certainly no occasion, Miss Westropp," he said with an admiring smile.

"You are scarcely consistent," said I. "How do you reconcile it with your notions of liberty, fraternity, and equality to call Kate 'Miss Westropp,' when you want to be 'plain Reginald' yourself?"

"I should be most happy to carry my levelling principles to any reasonable length; but you know, Jack, you have often told us we don't live in a land of liberty."

This sort of *badinage* was all very well for a few moments, and it had the fortunate effect of thoroughly banishing all formality; but something must be done to amuse so great a gun for the night,—and what was there for it but a pack of cards? We accordingly rushed into a game of whist with the most deplorable infatuation;—revoked, forgot the previous leads, trumped our partners' best cards, and otherwise committed outrages sufficient to raise the ghost of the immortal Hoyle. What better could he expected, when we all talked at random in a game which by its very name is specially consecrated to silence?

"Your lordship will doubtless find your new position a serious charge," my mother ventured to suggest.

"Very, ma'am;—I played the deuce by mistake."

"I declare I have no honour left."

"You don't say so?"

"O'Connell told me this morning that—"

"Jack must be out of clubs."

"Is it possible—The Knave!"

"And now you have ruffed my heart," said Kate to her noble partner.

"But we have won the odd trick.—Does any one remember what was trumps?"

Nobody did, nor was it of the slightest importance. Every one had been thinking of something else. If the perturbed spirit of Hoyle were to walk every night that his incomparable game is murdered, I fear, alas! it would never be laid.

After two games of incessant blundering, this mockery of amusement was put an end to. Lofthouse protested he had passed a delightful evening, and said he must do himself the pleasure of calling next day. I was sorely puzzled to divine in what his entertainment had consisted, but of course there was no accounting for tastes.

Before departing, we retired into my study for a few minutes' private conversation, in which, as if by a tacit mutual understanding, no reference was made to the dear departed Jane.

"The old story, I suppose, Jack?—out at elbow?"

"Shockingly ;—and now false appearances are to be added to my other woes. Here I am, going to battle in Parliament for an oppressed land, and I believe my huckster's clerk could buy and sell me."

“And the worst of it is,” said Lofthouse, “I have none of ‘the ready’ myself. But as far as my signature goes I won’t see you floored, and I think it ought to be worth something *at last*. Have you a blank bill of exchange about you?”

“My dear fellow, I should as soon think of being without a corkscrew. I consider it the real ‘Young Man’s best Companion.’”

He promptly endorsed a bill for a hundred pounds, saying that his pecuniary affairs would for some time be in a state of chaos, between his personal debts and the encumbrances on the estate, and that his law agent might as well have this trifle to settle along with his other liabilities. He would not listen to my expression of thanks.

“I don’t see,” said he, “how the dignity of the legislature is to be maintained. Here am I, a new acquisition to the House of Lords, and you to the Commons, and it seems a toss-up whether the peer or the commoner has the emptier pockets. For the present, at all events, we must both live on imagination.”

“Most slender diet,” said I—

‘For who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?’”

“‘Ah, no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me!’”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT.

LORD LOFTHOUSE'S signature proved more efficacious in Usuryland than I had ventured to hope, and a well-known discounter, after carefully satisfying himself of its genuineness, and communicating with the new peer's solicitor, handed me seventy-five pounds on the bill for a hundred, drawn at two months' date. However the future might go, therefore, this was a great present relief.

I found Gulgreina a miserable hole, consisting mainly of one tolerable business street, a collection of scattered mud hovels, and some waste land that justified the old rhyme—

“Country?—God bless you ! There's nought to be seen
But an ass on the common, and goose on the green.”

It had the good sense, however, to return me as its representative without any difficulty ; and for the rest, it was to be hoped that, when the Union was repealed, even Gulgreina would share in the progressive tendencies of the age. How, as I asked my new constituents in a vehement harangue of two hours length, could we be expected to be clean, and sober, and industrious, when we were trampled

under the hoof of foreign domination, and the wrongs of centuries had still to be avenged? I elicited tremendous cheers at the close of my peroration, by expressing a confident belief that "our Saxon oppressors would yet shake in their shoes amidst their guilty triumphs, when they learn what it is to wrap themselves in the mantle of an invincible idiosyncrasy, and to shut out the last glimmer of sunshine from the howling abyss of A VIOLATED ARK AND A RUINED CONSTITUTION!"

I have always held that the quality of oratory should be regulated very much by the capacity of one's hearers. It depends largely upon the degrees of latitude and longitude;—and it may be observed that I had by no means ventured on such bold flights as the foregoing in my unfortunate address at the Rotunda.

I perceived that my newly acquired privilege of freedom from arrest for debt must carry with it certain disadvantages by putting men of capital on their guard against me, at the very time that I should be most likely to require their aid. Fortunately, however, mysterious pickings such as had fallen to my lot last year were still available, though by no means in such abundance. As Mr. O'Connell had said to me, "There are pence, and pounds too, still to be had in Ireland by working for them." Next month, too, the annual "Tribute Sunday" was to be held, when from every Catholic chapel in Ireland the pence, and shillings, and pounds of a grateful people were to swell into a mighty torrent, averaging at least fifteen thousand pounds, for the

benefit of the great leader who had delivered them from bondage. Heretic though I was, I was a member, so to speak, of the O'Connell cabinet, and I knew that as long as a high tide rolled in upon the Liberator, his faithful lieutenants would not be left in low water. I felt easy in my mind, therefore, lived on the best, dressed as befitted one signing himself M.P., and whistled at care; while as for my mother, her gracious and condescending bearing towards society, after our sudden exaltation, was beyond all praise.

I must now proceed to narrate a singular incident, arising out of my attainment of senatorial honours. A week after my unopposed election, a few Repeal friends celebrated the event by entertaining me at a sumptuous dinner at the Gresham Hotel. When I say that we toasted each other over and over again during the evening, interchanging the most fulsome adulation, flourishing vocal and imaginary green flags, and banishing the Saxon rule from Ireland as effectually as it could be banished by noisy speeches and hard drinking, I have told perhaps quite enough about our festivities.

At one or two o'clock next morning we found ourselves perambulating—or, to speak with more literal correctness, circumambulating—the public thoroughfares, in our homeward course. Patriotism itself, alas! must get to bed some time or other, and accordingly—

“ We worked with sinuosities along,
Like Monsieur Corkscrew worming through a cork,
Not straight, like Corkscrew's proxy, stiff Don Prong, a fork.”

I have some faint recollection of kicking my hat before me as energetically as if it were an oppressor of my country, and laughing immoderately at the assault, although I failed to see the joke next day. One of my fellow-revellers who lived in Clare Street offered me a share of his bed, and I had reason before many hours to regret having declined his Samaritan proposal.

At length I reached Lower Baggot Street, having probably performed the extraordinary feat of walking seven miles between it and the Gresham. As I stopped before a house—evidently my own—I hushed the uproarious hilarity that had been bursting forth in snatches of “The Harp that once,” or declamatory appeals to “Hereditary Bondsmen,” and reflected with wonderful wisdom and deep consideration that people here were fast asleep, and it was not for me, who had been enjoying a glorious night, to disturb my wearied mother and sister. Yes, I was the most thoughtful of men. I was amused at the notion that I was in good spirits, and that good spirits were in me, and laughed heartily at the conceit, but with a silent inward chuckle, something after the manner of Hawk-eye. Caution marked my guarded way. This must be the hall door of the famous member for Gulgreina’s house. As for the number—hang numbers!—numbers were made for slaves, policemen, car-drivers, financiers, astronomers, ha! ha! ha!—why should I bother myself about numbers? The question was, would my latch-key open the hall door? If it succeeded in doing so, why the house must be mine. Q.E.D. Inwardly

marvelling at the intuitive mastery of logic by which I had made even a latch-key instrumental to carrying out a prolonged train of reasoning, I gained admission to the house, and, feeling as proud of my feat as Wellington may have done after the storming of Badajoz, I kicked off my boots and stole silently upstairs.

I opened a door—shut it again, cautiously as a burglar—groped noiselessly about—found another door, which I also opened—wondered what had brought it there, and whether my having taken some punch enabled me to feel double—and was strongly disposed to burst into a vehement oration on the absurdity of doors in general. That impulse yielded to the more pressing one of procuring needful rest, and, wriggling out of my clothes, I flung myself on a bed, having previously muttered something which charity might construe into a prayer.

The autumn sun was shining brightly as I awoke from a delightful, but delusive, dream of seeing Ireland once more restored to her ancient glories. Tormented with thirst, I sprang from bed to rush to the water-croft. Horror of horrors, where was I? This was not my room—and, worse still, it was not any room in my house! No;—it was a small back apartment, looking out on a yard, whereas mine was a large and lofty bedroom, facing the street. The position was most tormenting. I looked at my watch, and found it was half-past seven. The servants must be up; and there was nothing for it but to creep noiselessly downstairs, frankly explain my dilemma to any one I might

chance to meet, regain my boots in the hall, and get home as quietly as I could. Thus meditating, I gently turned the handle of the door, when to my unspeakable dismay I found myself in a larger bedroom—and a tenanted one ! I looked to see on whose privacy I had intruded, and imagine my consternation when I found that the sole occupant of the bed was a female, and that female Mary Anne Twycross, *née* Munkittrick.

What was the agony of mere pecuniary embarrassments, or imprisonment itself, compared with such a situation as this ? I remembered having heard Kate say that the Twycrosses had come to live near us in Baggot Street, but we were not on visiting terms, and my acquaintanceship was limited to a slight salute when we met, so that I had taken no interest whatever in the news of their becoming our neighbours. The question that puzzled me now was, why was Mrs. Twycross sleeping alone ? Could any coldness have arisen between her and her husband ? Could he be down in the country on a shooting party ? Or could he have been suddenly ordered to some foreign station ? In any event, and wherever *he* was, *I* was clearly in the wrong place ; and if a servant had observed me stealing quietly out of the room, my conduct would naturally be subjected to injurious misconstructions. In this tormenting dilemma I could think of no resource but awakening Mary Anne, informing her candidly of the manner in which I had come there, and consulting with her as to how I was to escape without making a scene. I drew, therefore, close to the

bed, and coughed gently, as I was afraid of being heard by any one outside.

She still slept on. Oh, moment of agony ! What would I not have given to be safe in my own house ! I coughed again, and somewhat louder, but still in vain, and at last, finding all gentler means unavailing, I was driven to the desperate expedient of giving the sleeping beauty a shake. This summary process had some effect. She turned lazily round, ejaculating—"Is that you, Henry dear ?" She was evidently annoyed at the interruption of her slumber, and very much disposed to fall off again, but I was determined she should not.

"No, Mrs. Twycross, it is I—your old friend, Mr. Westropp."

Had Imogen suddenly awakened while Iachimo was busy furnishing himself with materials to win his monstrous wager with her husband, she could not have been more astounded than was Mrs. Twycross. She was so overwhelmed that she could barely ejaculate in a thrilling tone, "What !" Then, half sitting up in bed, and rubbing her eyes, she endeavoured to convince herself whether this strange nightmare had any foundation in fact.

"Yes—it is I—I myself. No doubt you are surprised and shocked—but just listen to me for a moment."

A piercing scream was her sole response, as the whole enormity of the situation began to dawn upon her aroused faculties.

"For heaven's sake, be quiet. We shall be interrupted. Let me explain."

She screamed again, and more violently than before.

"Oh, this is too bad! Have you no regard for appearances? The simple fact is, I was dining out last night—"

"Help, help!—Eliza!—Mary! I shall be ruined."

"And I got into the wrong house. It was all an accident, upon my honour."

"Oh, be off out of this, or there will be murder!"

I felt, indeed, that the best thing I could do was to brave all consequences and withdraw, having such an unreasonable woman to deal with, and I made straightway for the door. Before I could reach it, however, it was opened from the outside by the two female servants, attracted by the wild cries of their mistress. They rushed in, and while one of them stared at me with an expression of blank horror, the other, who was gifted with more courage and presence of mind, put an effectual detainer on me by laying hold of my coat-tails.

"Oh, girls, I am so delighted you've come," cried Mrs. Twycross. "I thought I should have died of the fright."

My blood was up now, and I resolved on a precipitate retreat, since reason would not be listened to, and the dignified demeanour which I assumed was wholly disregarded; but retreat was a thing more easily meditated than effected. The attacking party immediately received a strong reinforcement in the person of John Thomas, who came running upstairs, eagerly demanding what was the matter.

"Oh, come in quick—it's a man—a gentleman—in the

mistress's very room," cried the less valorous of my assailants. "I never saw such a thing in my life."

"Oh, collar him, John!—oh, take him away out of this!" shrieked Mrs. Twycross.

John obeyed orders by seizing me somewhat roughly by the collar of my coat. It was a desperate moment, but though surrounded by superior numbers, severed from all communications, and alarmed about ulterior consequences, the native spirit of the Westropp promptly asserted itself.

"Let me go, you ruffian!" I exclaimed angrily. Do you know, sir, that I am the member for Gulgreina?"

"Begorra, sir, if you were 'Dan' himself, you have no business here. Do you know how he managed to get in, ma'am?" And he cast a scrutinizing glance towards the chimney, as if he thought it possible I might have ventured down that dark descent.

I struggled violently, but in vain. The scene was equally ridiculous and distressing. Was I really doomed to be hauled off, and perhaps carried to a station-house for a trifling "mistake of the night," to my explanation of which no one would listen? I remonstrated most energetically against this gross aggression on the liberty of the subject, and threatened legal proceedings, but as we all five talked incessantly together, my words could not be heard amidst the deafening din.

And now the enemy received a most formidable auxiliary in the person of their natural commander. It appeared that the absence of Captain Twycross was simply owing to

that gentleman's habits of early rising. He had gone for a constitutional stroll in the suburbs, and was returning with a keen appetite to breakfast. Admitting himself quietly, even as I had done, by a latch-key, he slipped upstairs, little suspecting the extraordinary scene in store for him.

"What is the matter?—What is all this fuss about?—What brings this gentleman here?" he inquired, as he found me in the grasp of the three menials in the lobby of the bedroom.

"He was in the mistress's room, sir—oh, it's a dreadful piece of business!" Then all three began vociferating their respective versions of a story so likely to prove agreeable to the listener, while I, in all the consciousness of injured innocence, loudly demanded to be heard in my own defence.

The Captain's brow grew black, and he stamped furiously, as he roared in a voice of thunder—"Silence, you set of fools! And you, sir, please follow me to the drawing-room."

I willingly complied.

"And now, sir," said he, as he closed the door after us, "let me ask you one or two questions. I have the honour of speaking to Mr. Westropp?"

"That is my name."

"Ha! I thought I had met you before on a memorable occasion. You were formerly a—a suitor of my wife?"

"A suitor? Oh, I know. Surely you're not going to

“rake up what happened once, when I was light-headed after a brain-fever?”

“Light-headed? Oh, yes!—But I will be patient. Go on!”

“I am glad to find you are disposed to listen to reason. Will you let me just explain the whole mystery?”

“With pleasure;” and unlocking a drawer, he took out a brace of pistols, and laid them with a very solemn and menacing air on the table.

“I got in here simply by a latch-key! It is really the most ridiculous thing in the world.”

“Oh, I have no doubt it strikes you in that light,” he replied sneeringly, and pointing to the pistols; “quite a capital joke, in fact.”

“Faith, I should have thought so, if it were not my own case.”

“How, sir? Do you mean to brazen it out? Do you think the happiness of families is to be recklessly trifled with in this manner?”

“I believe you are determined to drive me mad. What in the world has the happiness of families to do with my taking too much punch last night?”

“Everything, sir! Everything, when you come like a thief in the night—”

“To the wrong house.”

“Yes, sir, and the wrong room, too. You did not go to the servant’s room—or the parlour. Once for all, do you mean to justify your conduct?”

“So far from that, I regret it deeply. I respect your feelings as the husband of that excellent lady, and I admit the situation was most peculiar—”

“Peculiar !”

“Painfully so ; and I am not at all surprised at your suspecting me of some sinister design—”

“Oh, you are really too good.”

“But if hall doors and latch-keys are made so much alike, is there anything wonderful in a tipsy man mistaking one house in the street for another, in the dead of night ?”

The captain looked very hard at me, but could read nothing deceitful in my ingenuous countenance. A cloud seemed to roll from his mind as he said—“Is that really the case, Mr. Westropp ?”

“Most certainly.”

“A mere mistake of one house for another—two latch-keys made just alike—begad, that’s as good a thing as ever I heard !” and he burst into an immoderate roar of laughter, to the no small wonder and disgust of the three servants, whose ears were cocked at the keyhole, watching no doubt with sanguinary eagerness for disastrous results.

Explanations followed. The captain, who was a very decent fellow after all, and free from all unreasonable jealousy, was much amused at my description of the passage I had made through his bedroom in the dark, and of my consternation when I found myself there in my sober senses. He admitted that he himself was largely to blame, for having neglected to bolt his hall door before retiring for the night.

"I owe you an apology, Mr. Westropp," said he, "and I hope we shall be friends as well as neighbours from this out. You must stop to breakfast with me."

"Willingly. After all, it was not a bad scene, and no harm was done to anyone."

"As for that lazy wife of mine, it was a charity to rouse her. If she persists in her late rising, I'll have to threaten you on her."

"All right, captain. The early bird catches the worm, you know, and I have caught the breakfast. A couple of minutes ago I thought it would have been a leaden one in the Park: but *cedant arma togæ*."

"You relish the exchange—hey?"

"Very much indeed. Your bullets are rather hard-boiled eggs for my digestion;—so come along."

CHAPTER XVII.

CHASING A MYTH, AND CATCHING A TARTAR.

My intimacy with Mrs. Twycross, the Mary Anne Munkittrick of my early visions and speculations, was certainly renewed in a sufficiently strange manner ; and it had the pleasing and unexpected result of leading to a friendship between that lady and my mother and Kate. My mother's strong prejudices against Munkittrickism had vanished under the influence of Mary Anne's alliance with a military man of good position ; and the womankind of both houses soon became on visiting terms. Mrs. Twycross was a woman of much common sense, and when the shock I had so unintentionally given her passed away, she laughed at the whole transaction, and apologized for the violent language she had used to me, so that we became better friends than ever from that time forth. A chance reference, indeed, to the strange scene which I have described would sometimes put her to the blush ; and of course it was difficult for her and me to preserve the due amount of decorous gravity in the presence of servants who had witnessed that scene, and whose comments on it must have

been frequent and lively. To the captain himself it was a constant source of merriment. On one occasion he referred to it at a dinner-party, in his own house, and requested me, as knowing more of the matter, to describe the whole incident, which I accordingly did, with embellishments. A brother barrister observed that I was a proof of the virtues ascribed by Father Prout to the man who kisses the Blarney stone—

“ Oh, 'tis he can clamber
To a lady's chamber,
Or be a Member
Of Parliament.”

Though poor Mrs. Twycross was overwhelmed with confusion, she joined heartily in the general laughter, which, after all, was much more at my expense than at hers.

Hitherto I had been thrown too much among wild and volatile companions, and now the influence on me of a man of Twycross's shrewd practical character, so widely differing from theirs, was considerable. That influence largely, though unconsciously, aided me in entering on the duties of a member of Parliament, who had already acquired some reputation—some notoriety, at all events—and from whom a good deal was expected. And had I been fortunate enough at this period to obtain even a moderate fixed income, I have no doubt I should have kept clear of many of those follies and extravagances which it will be my subsequent duty, as a truth-telling historian, to record.

On a wild stormy day towards the close of October

Twycross and I took return tickets for Kingstown, where he had a brief visit to pay, arranging to dine together at his house in the evening. We had intended to ramble over Dalkey Hill, but the agitated state of the sea at Kingstown itself proved more attractive, and we walked slowly to the end of the east pier. I have always been strongly moved by the sight of nature in her grandeur or her fury, and now, as I watched the heaving and unrest of the troubled sea, convulsed after many days of storm, the oratorical instinct awoke, and I felt that I should have liked to deliver an harangue to the billows, if Twycross had only been kind enough to retire for an hour or so. He was made of much less emotional stuff, and he was contented to smoke the cigar of peace, and stroll silently along with his hands in his great-coat pockets, while I gazed with intense interest on the tossings of the wrathful element. A ship that had evidently suffered much during the recent gales was making for the harbour. To an eye so inexperienced in nautical matters as mine her task seemed almost hopeless. Ever and anon, after making some steady progress, a giant wave would sweep upon her deck, she would pitch heavily, and emerge slowly from the mass of seething foam ; and once or twice, in the agony of my apprehension, as she staggered in the fierce embrace of the deep, I cried out, "Oh, Twycross, she is lost !" "All right," was the only comment vouchsafed by my phlegmatic companion ; and on my endeavouring to rouse him from his apathy, and suggesting that we should hurry to the town to procure the assistance of a life-

boat, he quietly replied that it was blowing "half a capful," but there was no need for alarm. Half a capful !—then God save me from a whole one ! was my natural reflection. But my older and more travelled friend, who had doubled Cape Horn, and was familiar with the Bay of Biscay, was correct ; and in a very short time, which nevertheless seemed to my anxious sympathies cruelly prolonged, the gallant little ship steered into harbour. On looking at our watches we found that it was time to return, and proceeded to tear ourselves away from a scene which had a strangely powerful attraction for me.

Leaving behind us the convulsed waste of waters, we repaired to the railway station, and took our places in a carriage in which there was no one but an old bank director, whom Twycross happened to know. The bell had rung, and the engine was panting and bellowing in the agony of its haste to be off, when I noticed a young lady running along the platform. Another second, and she must have been late, but fortunately I was just able to assist her into the carriage, the haste she had exerted calling up into her cheeks a glow which made her radiant with beauty. She smilingly thanked me for "the helping hospitable hand," and we fell at once into easy conversation, which was quite uninterrupted, as Twycross and the bank director plunged rapidly into the engrossing subjects of consols and politics. I talked of favourite preachers, and found she was a co-religionist ;—of poets, and found we agreed in admiring those of the robust, intelligible, anti-spasmodic

school, so unpopular at the present day ;—of the tumultuous sensations with which I had just watched the terror and majesty of the sea, and found she was an enthusiastic lover of the sublimity of nature ;—of the gaities and frivolities of fashion, and found that she despised them. I felt as if I had known her all my lifetime, and her clear silvery voice was thrilling me with a new and inexpressible charm, when alas ! alas ! the train reached the terminus, in Westland Row. We must part ;—were we never to meet again ? I was about to introduce myself “ by name and surname,” as Peter Peebles hath it, and to request to be allowed the honour of calling on her, when an elderly lady pounced upon her, and carried away this lovely vision.

Ah, woe is me ! and was she to be only a vision ? Here had I stupidly suffered the invaluable moments to glide by, and in half an hour’s conversation had made no attempt to ascertain my fellow-traveller’s name, address, position in life, or anything else concerning her. “ Come like shadows, so depart.” I was moody and vexed with myself for my neglect on these points, and galled with the quiet irony with which Twycross congratulated me in our homeward walk on the new “ conquest ” I had made. Conquest !—of what ? of a moonbeam ; for it seemed unlikely that I should ever find anything more substantial in this beautiful and fascinating girl.

I have mentioned elsewhere that I had never been what is called “ a lady’s man ” ;—a fact which, paradoxical though it seems, may account for the infatuation which

now seized me, as well as for the facility with which I had been ensnared by the charms of Charlotte De Lacy. Your lady killers are naturally so much engrossed by the contemplation of *their own* perfections, that it is no wonder if they render only the mockery of verbal homage to those whom they most profess to admire.

The reader may easily imagine the rapture with which, after my pillow was haunted for the two following nights with visions of vanishing loveliness, I received the following *billet* :—

“If Mr. Westropp can make it convenient to call at No. —, Blessington Street, at half-past five on Thursday evening, the lady with whom he conversed in the train will feel much pleasure in renewing the acquaintanceship.”

My first impulse on receiving this communication was to jump with joy, and walk wildly about my bedroom, flourishing the dear letter on high in triumph. My next feeling was one of surprise at my name and address being known to my correspondent ;—but then I was a public man, and was daily astonished at proofs of my notoriety in the most unexpected quarters. But what did she want to converse with me about? While my sentiments were only those of love and admiration, might she not be desirous of turning my senatorial position to account?—of getting me to sign a memorial, or present a petition, or subscribe to a charity, or intercede on behalf of a criminal?—anything, no matter what trouble or expense it entailed, anything in my power to accomplish was at her service, provided only she

smiled upon me. And then I began to pronounce myself dreadfully "spooney;"—and then came the dark thought, was there not a shade of indelicate forwardness in her addressing me at all? Perish the thought! I stigmatized myself as a ruffian for entertaining it for a moment. And then came wild reveries and puzzling speculations as to who she could be, and all reveries and all speculations ended in a vague, but powerful and absorbing, feeling that I was about to become the happiest of men.

Next day I read the paper—which had only reference to an unknown young lady in Blessington Street,—and delivered a terrific oration, breathing hate and defiance to "the Saxon," at the very time that I was thinking of nothing but love,—and dined at three o'clock on a solitary steak, feeling that I could welcome "a stake at Smithfield or a chop at Tower Hill," if it led to my becoming a martyr in the cause—not of Erin, but of a beautiful girl, name unknown. The shades of night were falling fast, as through the streets of Dublin passed a youth dressed in the height of the fashion, and literally walking on air. Not to my mother, to Kate, to the Twycrosses, nor to any other living soul did I breathe a word of that mysterious assignation.

Please observe, gentle reader, what fools the tender passion makes of me, of thee! It was not till I had arrived at the appointed house in Blessington Street, and was tugging at the hall door as strenuously as though the knocker in my hand were a Saxon premier denying justice to Ireland, that I asked myself the very simple question, for whom was I to

inquire? For whom?—for the Woman in the Moon, if I liked. And as I reflected that no person answering that description could live there, my usual courage and presence of mind completely deserted me, and I was vainly puzzling myself as to what I should say, when an old woman answered my summons, and met me with the very pleasing and pertinent remark—“I suppose, sir, you’re the gentleman that was to have kem.”

“Oh yes—certainly. I am the gentleman—all right.”

What a jewel of an old woman was this, and what a world of embarrassment she had saved me by her unconventional abruptness!

“Step into the parlour, sir, and the mistress will be with you in a minute.”

I stepped into the parlour accordingly, and took a chair. It was a comfortable room, with a fire burning brightly, but no other light. “The mistress will be with you in a minute.” Rapturous thought! Who in the world could she be? I had hunted up Thom’s directory for her house (the number of which, for obvious reasons, I suppress), but it was marked “vacant.” Almost a year, however, had elapsed since the book was printed, and anybody, from Jenny Lind to the Queen of the Sandwich Islands, might be living there. What should I say to her?—or rather, what should I *not* say? I fell into a delicious reverie, from which I was roused by a merry little girl, five or six years old, who ran into the room, and immediately sprang upon my knee.

"And so you're the gentleman that was to come?"

"Oh yes, dear—I am the gentleman. And how did you find that out?"

"Mamma told me."

Mamma—what! A married woman! Surely my *inamorata* must be a maiden? Oh, yes. This child's mother might be a visitor of hers—or perhaps a sister. It would be a shocking bore, nevertheless, if she intruded on our conversation at such a time.

"And where's papa?"

"Oh, papa's dead, don't you know?"

"Dead, poor fellow! I am very sorry." The sapient advice of Mr. Weller senior, to beware of "widders," occurred to me;—but surely *my* charming girl could not be a widow?

The door opened shortly afterwards, and a tall middle-aged woman entered the room. I could not clearly discern her features by the fitful light of the fire, but the first tones of her voice were enough to show that she was not—what I wanted.

"Good evening, sir. You are the gentleman, I believe?"

This was the third time of asking, and a third time did I admit the important fact of my gentility.

"I hope you like the room."

"Oh, very much. When we are with those we love—we admire—or even expect them, every room seems delightful."

"Sir!"—she exclaimed, with the tone of a woman who felt it her duty to be offended, but who could not help

being pleased. I began to fear that she appropriated to herself my somewhat rash remark, uttered out of the very fulness of my heart. She continued, however, in most amiable mood,—

“But the drawing-room is much nicer. I’ll show it to you when Mary brings the candles.”

“Pray don’t trouble yourself. Lights are quite unnecessary.”

“I hope you don’t object to children?”

“I dote upon them.”

“I am so happy—some gentlemen object to them so much. You have not brought your trunk?”

“Oh, of course not. Why should I?”

“Well, there’s plenty of time. You will find your bed well aired.”

My bed well aired! I was struck dumb. It was impossible to vouchsafe any reply to such an astounding announcement.

“I see you are rather particular about attendance.”

“Certainly not. It is a matter which never gives me the slightest concern.”

“Indeed! Then you must have been joking with me about it.”

“Joking with *you*, ma’am! I am not aware I ever had the pleasure of meeting you before.”

“No; but I thought from your note—”

“My note!—what note?”

“Your note to me, of course. You said there was

nothing you were so particular about as attendance; but you'll find Mary do her best, at all events."

"My dear ma'am, there must be some great mistake here. One or other of us is certainly dreaming. I returned no answer to the beautiful girl's letter, for the simple reason that I don't know her name; but here I am, in obedience to her summons, burning with ardour to meet her once more."

"Really, sir, I must object to this. I am not accustomed to deal with gentlemen who—who go on this way—hem!"

"Ma'am?"

"You came here on a strictly business matter. Is it not so?"

"Well, yes; in a certain sense I came here on business, no doubt—business which I felt would be a pleasure."

"And then you begin talking of letters from a beautiful girl."

"The sweetest I have ever met—a perfect angel!"

"Do you mean to insult me, sir?"

"I assure you I did not allude to you at all."

Strange to say, this prompt disclaimer only irritated her the more. "Once for all, sir, what do you mean?"

"Simply what I say. I have none but the most honourable feelings towards the young lady. I was delighted with her during our brief meeting, and when she was kind enough to write to me—"

"This is intolerable. I am the only lady living here.

What has all this rubbish about angels and beautiful girls to do with your answer to my advertisement ? ”

“ Your *what* ? ” In a moment the real state of the case flashed across my mind, hitherto blinded and obscured by the mists of my new passion.

“ Yes, sir—my advertisement. Your answer was respectful and proper, and what I am used to from my lodgers. I did not think you’d begin with these low tricks, and I make bold to tell you, sir—though I’m a lone woman—they don’t become you. It would take very little to make me give you a bit of my mind, young man ! ”

Her blood was up. Mine was curdled with horror and disappointment. All my hopes were shattered at a blow.

“ I see how it is, madam. I have been cruelly hoaxed. But I need not trouble you with my private sorrows. May your heart never know the pangs that—”

“ Anything else, sir ? ”

“ Nothing but this—if ever a vision of loveliness—”

“ Good-evening, sir ; ”—and as she moved frowningly towards the door, her shadow, flung upon the wall, loomed into awful and gigantic proportions.

“ Farewell, madam—a word that must be, and—”

“ This is your hat, sir.”

“ Thanks ;—if you had but felt—”

“ And your cane.”

“ You are very good. Oh ! for one moment of—”

“ Good-night ! ” And she banged the hall-door furiously behind me.

I was out in the street, dashed from the height of airy felicity, and vaguely conscious that I must be a laughing stock to that ogress, who fortunately did not know my name. But though the hoax practised on me was successful, and I felt crushed and blighted under my disappointment, I could not repress a cynical laugh at my having been mistaken for an unknown gentleman answering an advertisement for lodgings. What a story Grimgruffina must have had for the real lodger, when he made his appearance ! I shrewdly suspected Mrs. Twycross of being the perpetrator of this practical joke. The letter to me was written in a delicate female hand. Of course it might have been penned by any woman whom either Twycross or his friend, the bank director, had informed of my engrossing conversation with the unknown beauty in the train ; but, by whomsoever written, it had answered the desired purpose of deceiving me, and had led to a scene which may furnish some amusement to an idle reader. I felt it due to my own dignity to observe profound silence on the subject with every one ; and I now tell the story for the first time, in the hope that it may prove a warning to those sentimental young gentlemen who “love not wisely, but too well”—if, indeed, there should be any such left in this enlightened and calculating age.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH A NOBLEMAN WITH SIXTEEN QUARTERS OBTAINS
A BETTER HALF.

SHORTLY after these transactions the bill for a hundred pounds which Lord Lofthouse had endorsed for me fell due ; and it did not find me as unprepared as the reader might imagine. In my hopelessly insolvent days I had always allowed my debts to take care of themselves ;—and I found that to save a vast deal of trouble. My custom was to keep staving off the evil day, and then trust to my ingenuity to extricate me by some bold stroke when the crisis should arrive. This course was not without a certain wild charm. The system, however, of honestly paying one's way was obviously more desirable—when it was possible ; and he has read my memoirs to little purpose who has not discerned that, at the worst of times, my personal predilections would have tended rather in favour of honesty ;—but then honesty was such an expensive virtue !

I wrote to Lofthouse, then at his castle in Tipperary, saying that I should renew the bill if he chose, but that I had scraped up half the amount, and if he preferred

settling it as a debt of his own, and receiving fifty pounds from me at once, I should thankfully reimburse him for the balance at Christmas. He replied in very handsome and friendly terms, saying that when I had borrowed the money I had seemed in hopelessly low water, so that he had directed his law agent, in arranging his own embarrassed and complicated affairs, to throw it in as a bad debt, and provide for its settlement out of the Lofthouse estate.

"I shall soon," he continued, "be worth eight thousand a year clear, which is better than twelve thousand deeply encumbered. For God's sake, try and avoid bill transactions in future. There is nothing destroys a man like them; and don't give me any thanks for my conduct in this matter, as I mean to trespass very much on your hospitality ere long.

"And now, Jack, a word of advice on another matter won't be taken in bad part from a fellow Repealer. Don't you think it time to give up the hollow humbug of this agitation? The footlights are very well for a while; but we can't be always acting. Like yourself I have blustered my share about 'the chains' that have been riveted on us for centuries; but where in the world, let me ask, have men such liberty as in the British Isles—or abuse it so much?"

To this important letter I replied promptly, thanking him for his generous settlement of my debt, and expressing the greatest pleasure it would give me to have him under my roof. His advice about my political career drew from me these remarks:—

“ There is doubtless a good deal of truth in what you say about the ‘liberty’ enjoyed by Irishmen ;—but it is not the whole truth. There is such a thing as *the liberty to starve* ; and it has been freely conceded to Paddy by his rulers. Property is always conservative. You don’t see—don’t even suspect the difference between Lord Lofthouse with his clear estate of eight thousand a year, and Reginald Austin, M.P., living by his ways and means. You and I are both right—and both wrong. We realize the old fable. You are looking on the golden side of the shield, and I on the silver. If, instead of being a nobleman, you were a poor devil whose grandfather had been hanged or shot in ’98, how long, probably, would it take to reconcile you to the institutions you live under ? No reasonable man can deny that Ireland labours under tyrannous land laws,* ecclesiastical supremacy, an unduly restricted franchise, a niggardly distribution of the public funds as compared with England—in short, a host of substantial wrongs, in addition to her sentimental grievances. While these evils exist, what course is left for a patriot but to follow the almost despairing advice of our great leader, ‘Agitate, agitate, agitate !’ As far as I am concerned, at all events, it is the one profession for which nature and circumstances have fitted me. ‘’Tis my vocation, Hal ;’—and every man must labour in his vocation.”

As I wish to be perfectly candid with the reader, I may confess that I wrote in this strain fully as much to satisfy myself as my friend. I had lately contracted—as this very

letter will show—a habit of looking at both sides of the question ; and such a habit is very inconvenient to a professional agitator in Ireland. How far was I in earnest ? Was I, after all, a true patriot ? Did I serve my country only with a view to the loaves and fishes to be won by such service ? And how much of my success must depend on the life and health of a man now in his seventieth year, worn by the incessant toils of half a century ? Questions like these often troubled me not a little, whether on public or private grounds, and on some of them I almost trembled to think ; but when I had once thought them fairly out, and embodied my views on paper in the above fashion, I was satisfied that I had acted for the best in the circumstances of my singular position.

I was anxious, however, to know if I had satisfied Lofthouse too ; and as a fortnight elapsed without my hearing from him, I became apprehensive lest he had taken offence at something in my letter. I was brooding over this subject of annoyance as I returned home one night at nine o'clock, after an agitating day (no pun intended) of committee meetings, anti-Saxon orations, the reception of national subscriptions—for we were not driven to depend upon America in those halcyon times—and other labours necessary for the regeneration of Ireland. Great, therefore, was my delight and surprise to find Lofthouse in my parlour, seated opposite the fire, and chatting away with my mother and Kate, with all the familiarity of old friendship.

“ I told you I should soon trespass on your hospitality,”

said he, "and you see I am making myself quite at home. I have not forgotten our famous game of whist. I vote for another."

"You are certainly thankful for small mercies, but there is no accounting for tastes. For my part, I have been bellowing so much patriotism to-day that a silent game will be very welcome to me."

"Silent? Why, there's nothing like whist to make people talk."

Oh, shades of Mrs. Battle and Parson Dale, what a heretic was here! And yet experience showed me that he was right, as far as the present company was concerned.

Kate was about to procure the cards, when the postman knocked, and delivered a letter addressed to my mother from one of her relatives in Miltown Malbay. Begging Lord Lofthouse to excuse her, she opened it, and was glancing listlessly over its contents, when something special struck her eye.

"Oh, Jack!" she cried, "who do you think is to be married next week?"

"Don't know—maybe Charlotte De Lacy."

"You have guessed it."

"What!"

Lofthouse looked at me significantly for a moment, and then burst out laughing, and I—though I felt a strange qualm for a moment, and certain delicious scenes passed in the Dargle and elsewhere rose tantalizingly before me—soon joined in his mirth.

"Well, I congratulate her heartily," said I. "I never supposed she would die an old maid. But who is the happy man?"

"That's just what I can't make out," replied my mother, poring over the letter in a state of great anxiety. "Dear Florence does write such a cramped hand. But this seems a most curious name. 'Can't—one—pull—tooth—out—'"

"Nonsense," said I, "no name can look like that—not even a dentist's. Just let me try my hand at it."

I took up the letter, and with the rapid glance of a pressman solved the mystery at once.

"Ha! ha! ha! After all, mother, you did not make such a bad attempt. Only think—Miss De Lacy is to be ennobled!"

Ejaculations of amazement all round.

"Yes—she is going to marry the Count von Pultuthowski, no less. I hope she is bettering her condition;—she is certainly not improving her name."

"Any name would be good enough for her," cried Kate, highly indignant with her designing friend, who had made another conquest with such indecent haste.

As we were all anxious for particulars, and my mother was bewildered by her correspondent's cramped and crossed handwriting, I was appointed interpreter of the mystic hieroglyphics. I made a bold dash at translation, and though occasionally floored by a hard word, the context enabled me to gratify the curiosity of myself and others.

It appeared that while Charlotte De Lacy had been at school in Germany, she had attracted the admiration of von Pultuthowski, a naturalized Polish count, with pale complexion, long hair, empty pockets, and a fine tenor voice, and who was supposed to subsist chiefly on music, love, and a vegetable diet. By this young gentleman Charlotte had been assiduously courted and serenaded, but his penniless condition prevented the course of true love from running smoothly, and after presenting her with some locks of his hair and tunes on the guitar—all he had—dire necessity compelled them to part in tears and anguish. And of all this I, who had taken such a Lover's Leap last summer, had never heard a single word. Oh, dissimulation ! Jove is said to laugh at lovers' perfidies. We have seen how Charlotte kept *her* vows, when she thought a rising young fellow-countryman was to be secured by breaking them. Poor Pultuthowski was more constant. The death of his father left him unexpected master of what the correspondent styled, "I don't know how many thousands of francs, but fully equal to two hundred and fifty pounds a year of our money, which it appears is considered a handsome fortune by some of the continental nobility ;"—and the first use he made of his wealth was to penetrate to the romantic west, and renew his vows of love to the wild Irish girl. There was a destiny in it ; and we cannot wonder that such persevering devotion was about to be crowned with success.

I ordered decanters, filled a glass of wine, and drank to

the health and prosperity of the Count and future Countess von Pultuthowski.

"And I," said Lofthouse, "drink to the memory of a certain fractured thumb, which prevented a young friend of mine from making a fool of himself."

But Kate could not view the matter with such levity. She was boiling over with indignation.

"I have no patience with such girls," she said.

"And why not?" asked Lofthouse. "Why should Miss De Lacy refuse the offer of a coronet? Are they so plentiful? Or is a peerage to be considered a disadvantage?"—sinking his voice.

"Certainly not—quite the reverse; but to think of her making such love to Jack—and then—"

"Well, really, I thought it was Jack made love to her. He told me so himself."

"A little of both," I interpolated.

"Oh, I don't know—of course I was not in her secret. But her conduct was horrid—monstrous."

"That's the way the stories go. I fear you young ladies are terribly severe on each other."

"Oh, of course!"—with a toss of the head, denoting the usual feminine readiness to cut up a character, and then hold a coroner's inquest on it, and bring in a verdict of "Guilty," with or without evidence.

But my mother's thoughts were running in a very different direction. "It's a distinguished match for Charlotte," said she, looking thoughtfully at the fire. "He's

a Pole certainly ; outlandish, perhaps ;—and his income is not very large.”

“It will do well enough till the young ’owskies begin to serenade them,” remarked Lofthouse.

“But look at the respectability of the connection,” said my mother, with marked emphasis. “I daresay this Pultuthowski can boast of sixteen quarters.”

“I’d rather have the four quarters of an Irishman any day,” said I.

“And he must have excellent blood.”

“Scarcely—if he has been reared on salads.”

“Jack, don’t be ridiculous. You know I was speaking of blue blood.”

“Very likely. Any I have ever seen was red.”

“There is surely good blood among the Poles.”

“Yes—among the Tilney Wellesley Long Poles, I believe.”

“I see I was right in asking for whist,” said Lofthouse. “As long as we talk about Miss De Lacy we shall only fall into scandals—or misunderstandings, at all events.”

The cards were produced, but they did not mend matters much. We were all thinking of that Queen of Hearts in Miltown Malbay, and of the long-haired vegetarian vocalist, to whose supposed “sixteen quarters” my mother, notwithstanding the paltriness of his income, attached more importance than she would to a fortune of twenty times the amount, joined to the name and family of Munkittrick.

"Jack," said Lofthouse, as I was parting from him at the hall door, after we had trifled over whist and supper for two or three hours, "I have passed an uncommonly pleasant night."

"I am delighted to hear it; but I should not have thought it if you had not told me. I was afraid you found us horribly dull."

"Dull! How could I, in company with a girl of such animation?"

"Oh, Kate can be lively enough; but don't you think she bore too hard on poor Charlotte's amiable weaknesses?"

"Yes, I daresay; but that's simply a proof of her own constancy. I always like women to take a high tone."

"Well, we'll postpone everything—'high, low, Jack and the game'—for to-night. Come and dine with us at six to-morrow."

"With the greatest pleasure. I am beginning to hate hotels. After all, there's nothing like the happiness of domestic life."

"I'll ask a couple of decent fellows to meet you; Malachi Fitzsimon and—"

"Not a soul, not a soul. I shall be vexed and bored if you do."

"What! no one to help to keep us awake?"

"My dear fellow, you may go to sleep, or to the theatre if you like, as long as you leave me here behind you."

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH I RECEIVE A DEPUTATION OF STRONG-MINDED FEMALES.

IT does not need the exercise of any extraordinary sagacity to discover that I was not the attraction by which Lord Lofthouse was drawn so powerfully to my house. No ; the centripetal force lay elsewhere, nor does it require a Newton to account for a gentleman's principles of gravitation in such circumstances. The reader, therefore, will be no more surprised than myself to hear that, in a very few days after the evening just sketched—on each of which Lofthouse passed many hours under my roof—Kate joyfully, tearfully, smilingly, blushinglly informed me that dear Reginald had proposed, and had been referred to my mother and me.

Referred to me ! Need I say that such a reference in such a case was the most ridiculous of farces ? What could I do but rejoice that, with my precarious income and false position, my dear sister should not merely be rescued from the dread of poverty, but at once ennobled and enriched by the means dearest to every woman, marriage

with the object of her choice ? And as for Mrs. Westropp, the bare idea of becoming mother to a titled lady so overwhelmed her, that I verily believe she would have gladly welcomed her noble son-in-law, though he were old, toothless, characterless, brainless, and decrepid. Such hideous sacrifices, alas ! are daily made in this great empire of aristocracy and snobocracy—sacrifices even more monstrous than that which Lofthouse himself had been on the point of making, at the shrine of Jane Broadhurst's wealth ; and certainly I had no reason to suppose that my mother would act more wisely than her neighbours. Thank God, in Kate's case there was little to fear. Habit and circumstances had indeed made Lofthouse what is usually (and somewhat vaguely) termed “a rake,” for a large part of his life ; but he was one of those rakes on whom dissipation has left no abiding traces—to whom it has been rather a source of torment and disgust than of gratification—and who in their reformation justify the proverb that they make the best of husbands.

The engagement soon crept into the papers. Dublin society was agitated by an announcement in the *Evening Post*, to the effect that a marriage was arranged between a noble lord, lately orphaned, and the beautiful and interesting sister of an eloquent member of Parliament, who had distinguished himself in the cause of Repeal, though his voice had not yet been heard within the walls of St. Stephen's. This was tolerably plain speaking ; and to show that we did not shrink from publicity, the real names of

both parties appeared immediately afterwards in that great patriotic organ the *Firebrand*, with which I have always maintained very intimate connections.

The marriage was fixed for the first week in February; and leaving the young couple to the pleasant task of billing and cooing, I proceed with the autobiographical career of a lover of his country, who, though only too susceptible to the tender passion, had nothing else to love at present.

I spoke just now of "my precarious income." The sources of that income I should no more think of accurately describing than a good Freemason would of revealing the secrets of his craft, or a true Catholic of the confessional. Suffice it to say that they were very satisfactory for the time being; but I was a young man, and with all my follies a thoughtful one, and the grim fact would often stare me in the face that I had nothing whatever to live on beyond the chance contributions of the faithful. How long were these to last? How long was the agitation for Repeal, which Lord Lofthouse had profanely termed "a hollow humbug," to continue? O'Connell had renewed the battle with characteristic energy and ability, specifying certain measures which he would be happy to receive as "instalments of justice for Ireland;"—but he preached to deaf ears. The government of Sir Robert Peel was indisposed to accede to any of his claims, and jealously watchful lest he should reassume his recent menacing attitude. The spell of his invincibility as a defier of law had been rudely broken, and though the Repeal movement was galvanized by his genius

into a semblance of vitality, those who looked below the surface could see that the really formidable power it had wielded in the previous year was gone. Meanwhile, the dreadful calamity which was so soon to lay Ireland waste was little suspected. The people of England, unmindful of the "sentimental grievances" of their neighbours, and probably suspecting that the cry of "wolf!" had been too often raised, were engrossed with the task of procuring cheap bread for themselves. The Anti-Corn Law League was a much more powerful body than the Repeal Association; and the thunders of O'Connell were disregarded in comparison of "the plain and unadorned eloquence of Richard Cobden."

As for myself—and it is my own history, and not that of more famous men, that I have undertaken to write—I was kept desperately busy during the months of November and December, though nominally the "vacation" season. My attention was claimed by an incessant host of applications, corporate, personal, or epistolary, that interfered not a little with my strenuous exertions in the cause of Repeal. It was my hard lot to be abused like a pickpocket in the papers—to find my table crowded with a pile of letters every morning—to be expected to give, at a moment's notice, a luminous exposition of any conceivable subject, from the decimal coinage to the Eastern Question, from the state of our agriculture to the finances of our railways, from the Cromwellian settlement in Ireland to the history of tithes in the Church. For sheer waste of time, perhaps, the deputation

nuisance was the most formidable of all. I have received deputations, if I recollect aright, from undertakers for the encouragement of their trade, from dairymen for the better preservation of public pumps, from the keepers of "Italian warehouses" for the promotion of Irish independence, from the association for abolishing imprisonment for debt (perhaps the only one that claimed my entire sympathy). Their name, indeed, was legion. But one—a deputation of fair advocates of "woman's rights"—afforded me so much amusement that I am tempted to give some description of it. In those days, it must be remembered, this question, which has since led to so many excellent practical results, was in its infancy, and was often advanced in a vague and unsatisfactory way that only covered it with ridicule.

When the appointed hour arrived, three ladies made their appearance. I felt considerable curiosity as to these representative women, and certainly I found sufficient diversity at all events among them. Two of them, aged respectively, I should say, sixty and forty-five—were tall, grim, bony, formidable-looking females, whose names I forget, but who reminded me so irresistibly of what Norna of the Fitful Head and Martha Trapbois might have been, that I shall call them, for the sake of clearness, after those creations of the great magician. They served as capital foils to their colleague, Miss Oglethorpe, a plump, rosy, laughing, dark-eyed damsel of nineteen or twenty, whom I should have preferred acting as spokeswoman, but who maintained for the most part a provoking silence, except for

the roguish eloquence of her eyes. It puzzled me to divine what could have induced such a guerilla to serve under such heavy cavalry. Most probably it was merely for the lark ; and no doubt her seniors were wise enough in their generation to perceive that the presence of a Hebe, like Miss Oglethorpe, might make a youthful member of Parliament more attentive to their representations.

I received these ladies "with my usual courtesy," as the newspapers say, requested them to be seated, and said,—

"As this is a subject especially affecting the rising generation, I should like to be favoured with the views of my young friend (if I may be permitted to call her so)."

Here I directed an appealing glance towards Miss Oglethorpe, who looked provokingly down.

"Pardon me, sir," said Norna, sternly ; "it is one emphatically requiring the sagacity of age, and the maturity of experience."

"Very good, ma'am. And may I ask what you suggest?"

"I suggest, sir, that woman should be free—free as the breezes that sweep the mountains ; that the accident of sex should not place her in the disadvantageous position of inferiority to man ; that the nature of her habiliments should not debar her from an equalization of privileges."

These Johnsonian periods did not help me much. I looked bewildered, and Martha Trapbois came to my aid in much more downright fashion.

"There is more in this question of clothes alluded to by the last speaker than meets the eye, Mr. Member," said she,

with a strong nasal twang, that at once proclaimed her transatlantic origin. "We wish to get in the thin end of the wedge. We air hampered on every side. What is the fa-act? A young man can go into a tavern, and call for brandy and water, whether he requires it or no ;—a young woman can't do so, even though she be tormented with thirst. A young man can go by himself to the theayter, and smoke cigars in public, and nobody minds him. Can a young lady do so? Not much, I don't think. Now what makes this wide gulf between the sexes? Clothes—I say emphatically, clothes."

Here Martha produced a box and took a pinch of snuff. I thought she was getting in the thin end of the wedge.

"Your views interest me very much ; but let us try to get to something practical. I presume you object to petticoats ?"

The Fitful Head shook ominously.

"We don't go into details," said Miss Trapbois, with a very snappish air.

"But I'm afraid that is the very thing you will have to do, whenever you seek assistance from a member of Parliament. You must be aware that a certain social stigma attaches to ladies who wear the—hem! who attire themselves in their husband's garments ?"

"Yes ; but that's all *prejudice*."

"Very likely ; but may not the prejudice have much foundation in reason ? Should we think so much of our lovely young friend here—who has not yet favoured me

with her views"—(here, under fire of those heavy guns, I stole a furtive glance at the dark-eyed nymph, who returned it very satisfactorily)—"if she availed herself of the masculine license to drink and smoke, which you seem to claim for the sex? Is not it all the better for women to be free from those temptations that beset us?"

"You will pardon me, Mr. Member, if I call all that romantic rubbish. Why in thunder should not a woman drink when she is dry, as well as a man?"

"And why," asked Miss Oglethorpe, speaking for the first time, "should not women be eligible to join the learned professions, and take degrees in the national universities, as well as men?"

"Hear! hear!" from the honourable member for Gulgreina.

"And why," asked Norna, "should not the fetters of inferiority, forged in the ages of ignorance, be struck off in the irresistible march of humanity towards social equality and regulated freedom?"

"My dear ladies, these are all very important questions, but—with the exception, perhaps, of that put by Miss Oglethorpe—they all fall wide of the mark. Far be it from me to deny that your sex labours under many unjust restrictions, which I hope to see removed in course of time; but you come to me for a specific purpose. That purpose, as I take it, is to urge the legislature to interfere in some vague general way for the furtherance of what are called 'woman's rights,' and yet you don't advance any precise views whatever on

the subject. One lady, indeed, who claims for her sex the privilege of drinking and smoking (which, of course, no Act prohibits), contends that it all resolves itself into a question of clothes. If so, I am at a loss to see how Parliament can help you. Surely you may dress as you please. Everybody knows that the days of sumptuary laws are past for ever."

Up to this point I had treated the subject with becoming gravity, but as I saw the deputation eagerly drinking in my words, the temptation to a little fun became irresistible. I continued,—

"Formerly, I admit, the legislature used to busy itself a good deal about the people's clothing, and I have by me a list of old statutes, some of which I shall read to you. Here, for instance, is the Sixth of Edward the First, Chapter 10—'One essoin for man and wife.' Now I'll venture to say, ladies, none of you can tell me what an essoin is?"

They all gave it up.

"There it is. Commentators vary in their opinions, but in my mind it simply means a suit of clothes, for the fortieth chapter of the thirteenth session of the same king treats expressly of 'a woman's suit.' Here I find in the thirty-seventh of Edward the Third, 'a statute concerning diet and apparel,' and the twenty-second of Edward the Fourth, first chapter, absolutely regulates among other things 'the length of gowns and mantles.' Nay, so far did they go that the first of Edward the Third, second chapter, is entitled 'House-boot and hey-boot within the forest.'

Imagine that—house-boots even in the forest ! Such were the good old times of sumptuary laws. Do you wish to have them revived ? ”

“Wonderful research !” Miss Oglethorpe ejaculated. Norna and Martha, on the other hand, looked particularly fierce, as if they suspected I was trying to quiz them, but were not able to prove it. They evidently held my legal attainments in profound contempt ; but what did I care ? they were not attorneys, nor was I a practising barrister.

“Perhaps,” Norna suggested, “you would be good enough to lay our views before your constituents when you next address them ? ”

The notion of laying their views before the ragged tatterdemalions of Gulgreina, whom, by favour of Mr. O’Connell, I was permitted to call my “constituents,” proved almost too much for my gravity and my politeness. By a powerful effort, however, I checked the tendency to laughter, and replied,—

“I should be most happy ; but I fear that my constituents are too much absorbed in grave political questions to turn their attention to any side issues, however interesting. I have been elected, as you cannot but know, for a specific purpose. It is my mission to break the chains of centuries, or perish in the attempt.”

“Seems to me eternal hard that nothing can be done to break the chains of our sex,” Martha Trapbois grumblingly remarked.

“Nothing by legislation, certainly,” I replied, “till you

indicate more precisely what those 'chains' are ;—but the remedy lies in your own hands.

‘How small, of all that human hearts endure,
The part which laws or kings can cause or cure!’

If two or three hundred young ladies, like my charming friend here”—(bowing)—“agreed to turn out next week in hats like ours, and great-coats, and stand-up collars, you would get in your ‘thin end of the wedge’ far better than by anything Parliament could do for you. Nothing can stand before the force of public opinion. The ladies have it in their power to unsex themselves to a certain extent. Whether it is desirable for them to do so is another matter altogether. For my part, to tell the honest truth, I am a stubborn Conservative on these points ; and while I shall always be happy to work for the redress of any real grievances you labour under, I don’t see my way to giving you any promise of assistance at present.”

As usually happens with unsuccessful deputations, the ladies thanked me for my courtesy, and withdrew. I showed them downstairs to the hall, where, pressing the hand of Miss Oglethorpe, who lingered a little behind, I whispered, “For mercy’s sake let your friends go, and we can talk over this question much better together.” She looked nothing loth, but her escape was not in the programme, and there was no eluding the vigilance of her guards. As they swooped down upon her, and marched off with her in triumph, she regarded me with such a glance as *Brisëis* may have thrown upon the disappointed *Achilles*, when the two heralds bore

her away in their custody. Woman's right to remain, and discuss woman's wrongs in a satisfactory *tête-à-tête*, was denied her. Weak woman had gone forth to do battle in conjunction with her strong Amazonian sisters, and was vanquished by her allies. Destiny was inexorable; and Achilles and Brisëis had to share the fate of Tantalus.

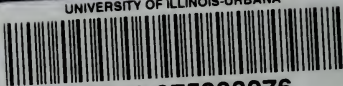
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LONDON

PRINTED BY GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, LD.,
ST. JOHN'S HOUSE, CLERKENWELL ROAD, E.C.



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